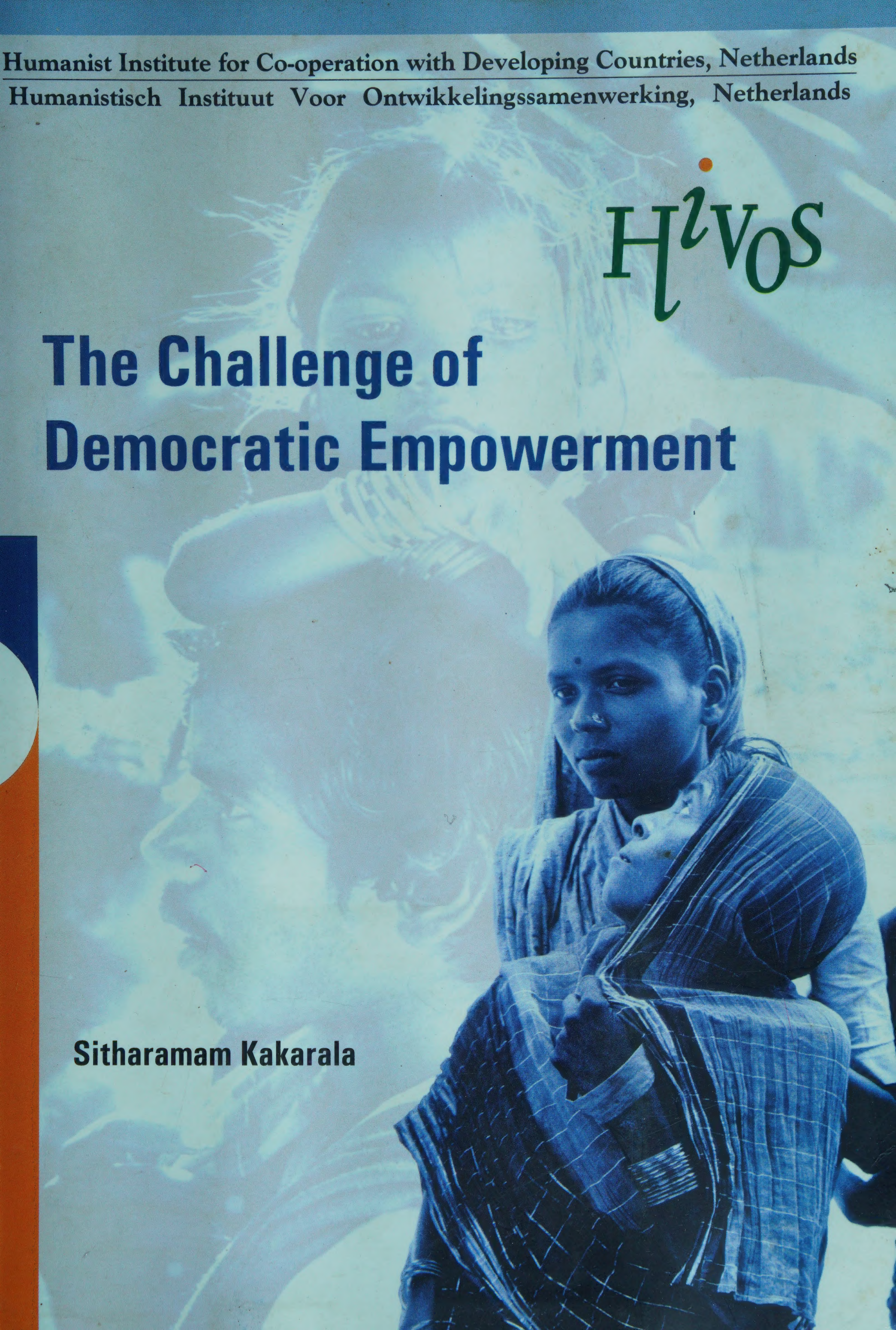


Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, Netherlands  
Humanistisch Instituut Voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, Netherlands

HIVOS

# The Challenge of Democratic Empowerment

Sitharamam Kakarala



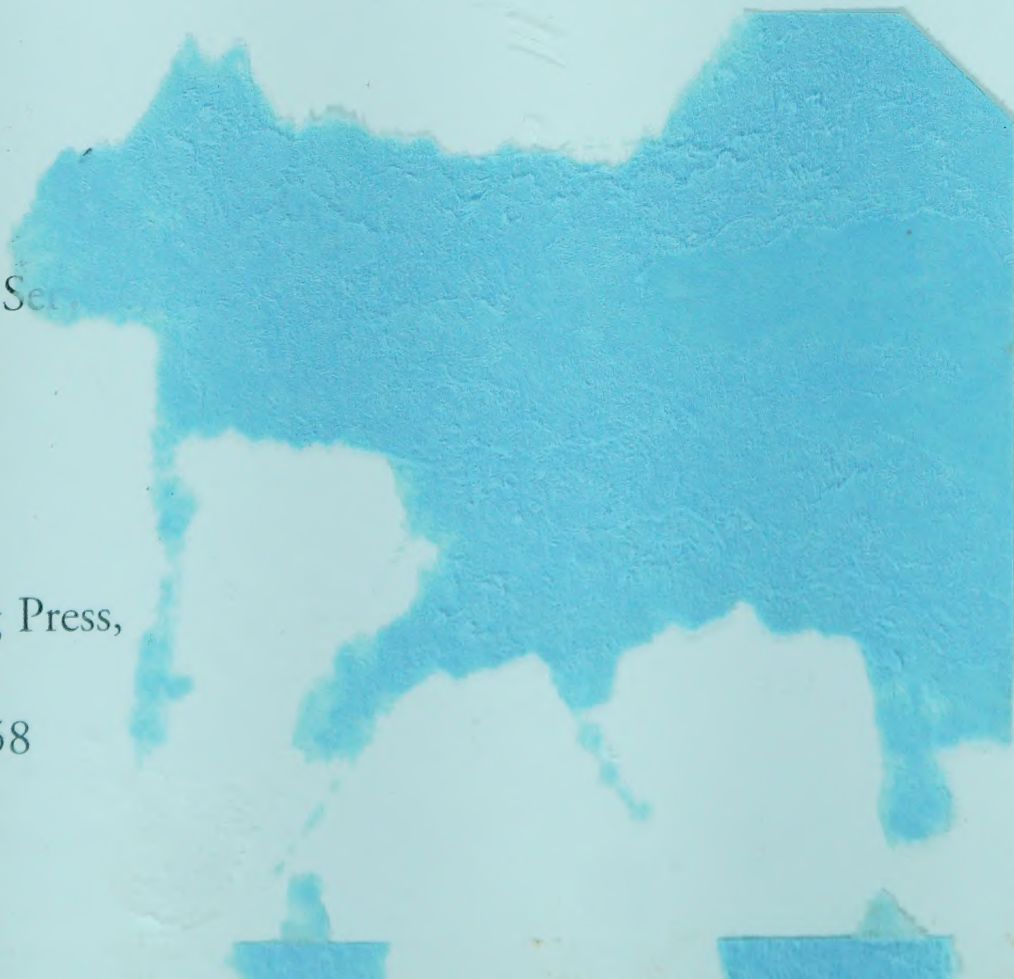


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CONTENTS

# The Challenge of Democratic Empowerment

## SECTION I

Sitharamam Kakarala

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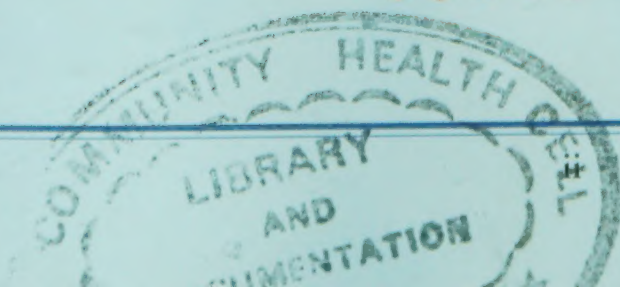


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# The Challenge of Democratic Empowerment

Richard M. Lippman

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## CONTENTS

Technical Report Series .....	v
Preface .....	vi
Contemporary Debates and Developments in Civil Society Building-About Hivos .....	xi
Acknowledgements .....	xxviii
Executive Summary .....	xxix

### SECTION I

1. Introduction: The Irony of 'Development' .....	1
2. Developmentalism before the Current Wave of Globalisation .....	3
2.1. 'The Great Policy Transformation' .....	6
3. From 'Nation Building' to 'Civil Society Building' .....	8
3.1. A Mapping of the Current Context .....	8
3.2. 'Civil Society' in the Development Policy Literature .....	11
3.3. Hesitation to engage with 'Definitions' .....	12
4. Decoding the Strategies of New 'Civil Society Building' .....	14
4.1. CSB Strategy 1: Creating Social Capital .....	14
4.2. Decoding the Visible and the Invisible .....	17
4.3. The Invisible: Depoliticisation, New Communitarianism and Clientelism ...	19
4.3.1. Depoliticisation: The 'Second Wave' of Decentralisation and Participation .....	19
4.3.2. CSB Strategy 2: 'New Communitarianism' .....	23
5. Understanding the Potential Implications: Towards a 'New Clientelism' .....	27
6. Some Tentative Concluding Observations .....	31
References .....	34



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Glossary .....	45
----------------	----

SECTION II

Community Participation, Decentralisation & Democratic Empowerment: .....	51
A Bibliographic Resource	
<i>Akhila Seetharaman</i>	
Part A : Annotated Bibliography .....	51
Part B : A Bibliography of Indian Studies .....	90

ANNEXURES

Annexure I: Hivos Publications and Policy Papers .....	123
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## Technical Report Series

This Technical Report Series is part of the Hivos-India Regional Office's effort to participate actively in the debate and dialogue in India on issues of human development and emancipatory interests. This series consists of monographs, working papers and Hivos conference proceedings. The publications reflect policy concerns of Hivos regarding development issues in India and address the problems faced by the marginalized in developing countries, such as in the areas of human governance, environment, gender, culture, the politics of development, human rights, information and communication technology, and economic activities.

*Series Editor: Shobha Raghuram*



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## PREFACE

It is with pleasure we make available to Hivos partners, to the wider circle of members of the voluntary sector, to policy makers in development aid institutions and interested academics the special study done by Prof. Sitharamam Kakarala (Faculty Member of National Law School of India University, presently on lien at the Centre for the Study of Culture & Society, Bangalore), titled “The Challenge of Democratic Empowerment”.

### Brief History

For Hivos the debates on civil society in the present context of diminishing state responsibility to welfare issues and growing privatisation are extremely crucial in providing effective support to partner organisations. In 2002 Hivos published its Institutional Policy Paper “Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, which carries a vision and a formulation of the institution as it stands poised to consolidate the knowledge and the experiences of the past and also to take on new challenges. The policy paper made significant observations on the shrinking importance of development aid and how it still remains necessary, the need for the improvement in the quality of aid, and the millennium development goals as part of a broader political agenda. It reiterated the Hivos focus on institution building which strengthens the participation of civil society organisations. We have reproduced some of the sections in this report.

Before that in 2001 the Hivos India Regional Office had commissioned a study with Dr. R. K. Shrivastav of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) regarding the evolution of civil society in India – “A Revisit to India’s Voluntary Sector: A Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period”, Position Paper IV. Excerpts from this study are also reproduced in this text.

In 2003 February the four co-financing institutions of Novib, Hivos, ICCO and Cordaid along with the Centre for Women’s Development Studies organised a national workshop on “The Context and Dynamics of Civil Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. The workshop invited a large number of partners and independent social movement leaders to dialogue on their perceptions of civil society and the implications for development aid, policy making and financial investments in the social sectors. The workshop touched upon livelihood issues and civil society, right to information and citizenship, civil society organisations and governance, growing social violence and the development agenda. Members of the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Development Cooperation wing were present for this meeting. The workshop report has been prepared by the Centre for Women’s Development Studies (CWDS). Most of the participants



reiterated the several crises on the field and suggested that the development agenda has to be a long-term one and issues such as increasing immiserisation and rising social violence cannot be addressed without committed partnerships. It was urged that NGOs must become part of a critical broader publics who can forcefully create alternatives, and remain a vibrant force in the process of social change.

### Key Issues in Civil Society Building

There is much preoccupation with the notion of civil society building today and a large number of policy definitions are being mooted on issues concerning people's participation, the rights' discourse, the meta-theory of development and more complex definitions about "empowerment". The last fifty or so years of modern development in south countries included large investments in narrowing poverty divides and facilitating social equality for those excluded from mainstream development. These have met with limited success. The present situation where nation states are increasingly reducing support to vulnerable populations has resulted in extensive debate on issues of role of aid, and the responsibility for social development. In 1995 Sitharamam had done a short assessment for Hivos regarding the civil liberties movement in India and why it was not supported by foreign funds. His perceptions in this present paper show a critical evolution since that study and provide to readers the challenges of conceptual practice and the need for going beyond the jargon and the rhetoric and arriving at the implications of development as understood by people themselves. People are living at the margins of existence and struggling for dignity in a world that remains divided as ever.

Over the last four decades various approaches have been evolved by different multilateral, bilateral NGO donors to meet the challenges of 'under development' in general, and the co-existence of poverty and wealth in post-colonial societies. Although the core objective at the heart of development theory was "empowerment and building civil society" there seems to be a lack of clarity as to how politically accurate were these concepts in reflecting the hard struggles occurring across the globe and the harsh realities of social conflicts. Everyone talks of "poverty reduction", "community participation", "empowerment", "security" and "social capital" but we do not seem to be able to come to a clear analysis which enables us to play the correct supportive role to partners engaged in efforts at the field level. Sitharamam argues that the role and significance of civil society building in facilitating democratic empowerment has to be viewed from several angles. 1) Civil society building is not an end in itself and it must need to strengthen citizenship values and contribute to consolidating democratic political orders based on equality, freedom, inclusion and self-determination. He states that an effective democracy would naturally mean a vibrant civil society. 2) Many national constitutional orders appear to be in crisis and civil society efforts need to be directed to strengthening the rule of law and



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insist on the constitutional route for establishing democratic governance. 3) Civil and political rights along with economic and social justice rights have been the main sectors in which poverty eradication efforts have also been focused. The assumption has been that poverty eradication strategies alone may not realise rights. A rights'-based approach to human needs has to be strongly underscored. 4) New forms of 'clientelism' have occurred in the voluntary sector and they do not completely adhere to the goals of equality and equity.

The various contexts of power equations and the questions of local identities produce different kinds of processes. Sitharamam poses the question of what methods and measures are we suggesting for meeting needs with a rights'-based approach. Sitharamam also draws our attention to the conflict between *approaching human needs in a market efficiency model* with *having the human being in the centre and using the rights'-based approach*. Indeed, Hivos strongly endorses the latter position. What is necessary to the markets, Sitharamam argues may not be necessarily just to human beings. Slavery may have been good for the markets but could not be justified on the basis of the principles of human dignity. Some forms of bondage may be culturally accepted but simply unjustifiable. The measures of cultural relativism have to be located in the broader macro policies and declarations as ratified by governments elected by people.

Sitharamam also underscores the importance of citizenship and states that when people participate as citizens they are far more than simply being "stakeholders". The latter term is more reminiscent of being part of market participation. Indeed, he provides an excellent glossary for the readers which helps the reader to locate the discussions regarding the concepts.

Thus the author provides a far more complex and multi-dimensional character to the term "empowerment". He locates empowerment not just as a matter of bettering one's life condition by access to power and resources but also the direct engagement in a far more democratic process of social reconstruction.

The paper is an interesting attempt to examine social resistance and attempts at social change through the critical examination of popular terms and thus arriving at an understanding of the civil society debates in contemporary times. Hivos in its programme support has developed strategic forms of support which contribute to strengthening institution building at the grassroots- membership organisations, trade unions, cooperatives, new forms of economic institutions, women's network organisations, tribal people's associations and human rights institutions active in the area of eradication of child labour and rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. Hivos has reduced its support to typical asset-building, intermediary organisations. The cheque-book donor mentality has always been rejected. Building just and committed partnerships has been a major goal of Hivos. Hivos has supported serious and critical dialogues



which remove from aid the underpinnings of power, typical patronage and the problems of clientelism which development aid often can cause. Self-reliance and the respect for the autonomy of partners has been a central aspect of our programme policy. The paper by the author, it is hoped, will contribute to the tough debate going on today about the power that people at the grassroots are struggling for and what should be done to determine the nature of the alliance. In many ways this paper calls for a return of serious and well thought-out strategies on the nature of people's social action and the correct conduct for institutions which support the efforts of others for social equality. John Harris in his book, "Depoliticising Development: The World Bank and Social Capital", underscores that civil society exists in a field of power. He is critical of the growing tendency of neo-liberal orthodoxy to depoliticise discussions on civil society.

The paper is accompanied by an annotated bibliography painstakingly done with a young journalist Akhila Seetharaman where the reader is provided with brief summaries that give information and insight into the main arguments of relevant literature short-listed by the author. For a quick scan on very recent literature this is an invaluable resource. A glossary has also been prepared – key concepts are analysed by the author. This should prove useful for all readers.

### The Report

We include after this preface important excerpts from the Hivos policy paper on "Civil Voices on a Global Stage" as a way of introducing to the reader the Hivos policy sectors.

If readers (e.g., in non-profit/non-commercial grassroots organisations, who otherwise do not have easy access to material) would like to have easy and ready access to materials on development theory and policy please do contact the author for assistance. This entire text is also available on soft copy. Please do contact the Hivos India Regional Office for the same.

We would like to thank the author Sitharamam Kakarala for agreeing to share his work with Hivos partners and the wider community of voluntary organisations. To Akhila Seetharaman and Sarita Vellani our sincere thanks for the various levels of editorial assistance. To Hemalatha a special word of appreciation for engaging with the author, the printers, in an effort to bring out a quality publication.

Last but not least, we would like to thank Prof. Henk Manschot, Prof. Caroline Suransky who have encouraged this office to think seriously about the multiple dimensions of human development with a specific focus on issues of ethics and power. This publication has been in the making at the same time as the Human Development and Human Rights training



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programme of the Humanist University, Utrecht, Netherlands, developed by Prof. Henk Manschot and his collaborators. We respect the partnership and value the efforts to enter into serious dialogue with social activists committed to inclusive futures for all across borders. Prof. Kakarala will join Prof. Manschot and his colleagues as a member of the faculty when six Hivos partners from India travel to the Netherlands to participate in this unique programme.

As the world continues to be troubled with persistent problems of economic inequality, social conflict, loss of freedoms, there are many signs of hope as well. This report is dedicated to people living in the harshest of circumstances who have not given up the will for democratic rights and have exercised their presence as citizens. People, living in the deserts without water, forming water-sharing networks, women sending their children back to schools so that their lives may be

different from those of their parents, who had no access to the written word, tribals organising themselves in search of better livelihoods and protecting their commons..... all these examples of clear social change provide a beacon to all of us for continuing social-development efforts.

**Dr. Shobha Raghuram**

Director, Hivos India Regional Office

21.05.04



# Contemporary Debates and Developments in Civil Society Building — About Hivos

## I. Introduction:

Hivos is a development institution which stands for emancipation, democratisation and poverty alleviation in developing countries. Hivos supports organisations that enable women and men to assert their rights and improve access to decision-making processes that bear on their immediate social environment. Hivos has a preference for supporting social organisations that are controlled by the poor and marginalized themselves, although it does not exclude the possibility of extending support to intermediary NGOs. In India, Hivos concentrates its supports in a limited number of states, i.e., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and New Delhi. In Goa, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, we have a limited presence.

## II. Hivos Policy Sectors:

Hivos's basic commitment is to the poor and marginalized people and their organization in the countries of the global south and East and Eastern Europe. Hivos ultimate goal is to contribute to a democratic, pluriform world society where all people – women and men have equal rights and opportunities to participate in decision making processes. Justice cannot be achieved without gender equality and have different dimensions – social, political, economic, ecological and cultural – that need to be addressed coherently.

Hivos specialises in two main policy domains: “civil society building” focuses on the reinforcement of, and conditions for, inclusive and democratic decision making and “economic and sustainable development” focuses on the economic aspects of development within the respective of social and ecological sustainability.

Hivos's sectoral policy thrusts are in the areas of economy; culture & the arts; environment and sustainable development; gender, women and development; and human rights (including HIV/AIDS).

Culture and the Arts: The objective of the sector policy is to foster and contribute to the development of democratic and pluriform societies by supporting initiatives in the arts and cultural sector that reinforce the pluriformity of visions and critical reflection on society, notions of identity and self-esteem, and (inter) cultural communication and exchange.

Economy: The objective of the sector policy is to improve income opportunities for poor



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people, especially women; mainly by expanding and improving their access to markets and to financial services (e.g. savings, credit). Directive to the economic policy are objectives of financial viability and social and environmental quality in economic production processes.

Environmental and Sustainable Development: The objective of the sector policy is to support sustainable development by reinforcing the sustainable management of natural resources, the sustainable management of natural or production system biodiversity, and the productive capacity of ecosystems. A major part of the policy focuses on the development of production processes that conserve, restore or at least do not negatively affect the ecosystems stability and variety of genes and species, the diversity of biological processes and important habitats.

Gender, Women and Development: The objective of the sector policy is to promote the emancipation and empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality at all levels of society. Empowerment is operationalised in five interrelated dimensions: material well-being, access to resources and opportunities, self-esteem and equal rights, participation and decision-making, control; over resources and benefits and self-determination.

Human Rights: The objective of the sector is to contribute to the democratic, pluriform world society where all people women and men – have equal rights and opportunities to participate in decision making processes determining their lives, and where justice and sustainable development are ensured. The policy uses the “rights-based approach” to wards the realization of this goal. The human rights policy focuses on: promoting basic political rights, promoting the rights of specific groups (dalits, indigenous people, people with HIV/AIDS, GLBT and human rights defenders).

### **III. International and Dutch Development Cooperation – Extracts from “Civil Voices on a Global Stage” Hivos Policy Paper 2002**

The Hivos Institutional Policy “Civil Voices on a Global Stage: Hivos Policy Paper 2002 carries a clear vision and formulation of the institution as it stands poised to consolidate the knowledge and experiences of the past and also to take on new challenges.



## Development Co-Operation

### *Development Co-Operation: Still a Notion and a Reality*

Though Hivos – policy wise - prefers to define itself as an actor in international co-operation, the notion of ‘development co-operation’ is still a public and political reality. In the perception of others and administratively it is the domain where Hivos belongs to. Politically, development co-operation is the arena where the rights and interests of the worlds’ poor and marginalised can - and should - be advocated without bias. Enough reason to elaborate.

### *Shrinking Importance of Aid, but it Remains Crucial for Africa and LDC's*

Development co-operation has lost ground during the last decade. The international target is still set at 0.7% of the GNP, but in reality that percentage has dropped to an average of 0.27% among the 5 highest spending donor countries. Only the three Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands (0.8%) meet the international target. Although some important donors are increasing their budget, the overall trend is a standstill. At the same time the investment of private capital - especially in middle-income countries - is on the increase.

The shrinking importance of aid at macro level obscures the increasing dependence on international aid, particularly in the least developed countries (LDC's), of which 34 in Africa (= 69.4%). Despite UN conferences and donor pledges, the LDC's are still being pushed into the margins of the global economy. For them aid is a lifeline.

### *International Agreements Improve the Quality of Aid*

Just as important as the quantity of aid is its quality. One way of judging the quality of aid is by the measure (or better: the lack) of accompanying conditions: unconditional aid can act as a catalyst, it can trigger development. For the quality of aid the international UN-conferences of the last decades - Rio, Mexico, Copenhagen, Beijing, Cairo, Vienna, and Kyoto – have been important. The international agreements that were drafted there, show a shift from a welfare- to a rights-based approach and define international targets for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Most governments have signed these agreements and are politically committed to their implementation.

### *Millennium Goals as Part of a Broader Political Agenda*

The so-called “Millennium Development Goals”, as set out by the UN, are international



development goals that have acquired broad international support. The number of people living in extreme poverty should be halved by 2015. Most of the goals are related to issues of income, health and education. Two of them are more political as they address, quite explicitly, the northern governments: they must ensure environmental sustainability and must commit themselves to create a global partnership for development.

These goals are part of a much broader international agenda. Development targets cannot be looked upon in political or cultural isolation: in order to reach them, stringent measures are necessary in the fields of international trade relations, access to northern markets, debt relief, the quality of governance in developing countries as well as countries in the North, governance by international bodies, climate change, regulation of intellectual rights, biodiversity, etcetera. This is the agenda to be influenced by national and international civil society organisations. This is the agenda that inspires Hivos and its partners.

#### *PRSP's: Planning Instruments, often Top down and Uniform*

FI's, OECD and UN are stressing the importance of good governance and human investments. This should result in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP's), to be drafted by southern governments with participation of civil society, that can serve as frameworks for (governmental) donor co-ordination. PRSP's are once again defining a separate domain of development co-operation. One may wonder whether this can be called progress. Given the character of the instrument, the process is largely top-down and still directed by The World Bank and, at a national level, by the government. Hivos values the ownership idea behind the PRSP processes, but it questions the uniformity of the approach and the often undemocratic form of the process, as indeed do many of Hivos' partners.

#### *Dutch Development Co-Operation Culturally Rooted, Receiving Public Support,.....*

The trends and issues, which have been portrayed in this chapter, can quite easily be identified in Dutch development co-operation policy. The Netherlands is an active follower of the international trends and it sometimes takes initiatives, together with like-minded countries. Dutch society has since long been interested in international relations and issues. As a small country, ties to the outside world have always been of eminent importance for the survival and welfare of the Netherlands. Though self-interest and economic necessity lie at the heart of this attitude, it reaches much further. Dutch



society abounds with civil and political interest in international phenomena and relations, including human rights and development.

The UN is popular and the Netherlands is gladly complying with its international obligations, and gives additional donations to a number of special UN-funds. It is against this background that Dutch development co-operation still receives a lot of public support, despite the recurring debates questioning the efficiency and effectiveness of the aid instrument.

*...Reflecting Segments of Society, and Above all Showing Continuity*

The level of private donations to aid in the Netherlands is amongst the highest in the world and is not diminishing. There are many private initiatives going on, carried forward by a variety of actors from the domains of market, local government and civil society. Although successive governments each sported their own brand of development aid, continuity has ruled in the long run. Changes go step-by-step, most of the time in a dialogue with the actors concerned. In the Dutch aid portfolio various segments of society have their specific points of entry. In comparison with other European countries, the market-related part of the aid budget is relatively small, and so is the bilateral part of the budget. An important part of the budget is allocated to multilateral organisations from the UN-family and The World Bank-family, and, to a lesser degree, to the EU.

*NGOs Account for a Significant Part of Dutch Aid*

Non-governmental organisations traditionally play an important role in Dutch aid. Up to 20% of the budget is being spent on direct NGO-subsidies and on NGO project and programme support under the umbrella of bilateral aid. The Co-Financing Programme (CFP) - structured along the principles of delegation, professionalisation and society-based pluriformity is the leading NGO-programme. It accounts for 11% of the budget.

*Hivos: Enthusiastic about CFP Opportunities*

The CFP - Hivos' major source of funding - has recently been restructured. Quality-based competition is a new element, and lobbying in the North is now considered part of the programme. The restyled CFP encompasses a number of small-scale activities rooted in Dutch society, it stimulates co-operation between civil actors and it rewards taking risks. Hivos is still enthusiastic about the unique policy contents of the CFP. All in all, the new CFP creates opportunities as well as challenges for Hivos.



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## Culture and the Arts:

The objective of the sector policy is to foster and contribute to the development of democratic and pluriform societies by supporting initiatives in the arts and cultural sector that reinforce the pluriformity of visions and critical reflection on society, notions of identity and self-esteem, and (inter)cultural communication and exchange.

Supported are independent and innovative initiatives in the area of film, literature, theatre, dance, music, and expressive arts, in the areas of:

- productions initiated by local artists;
- local (cultural) infrastructure, e.g. education, production facilities, distribution activities, and professional organisations;
- promotion and distribution of cultural producers/productions;
- South-South exchange between artists and cultural organisations.

Exchanges between cultural organisations and the use of ICT are important strategies in promoting intercultural learning and understanding among artists as well as among different audiences.

“Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 26).

## Economy and Sustainable Development

Main goal: To improve the economic position of poor and marginalised women and men in a sustainable way

improved access to income opportunities and to income-related services, economic resources and infrastructure;

improved access to local and (inter)national markets;

improved quality of production processes with regard to their ecological and social sustainability (including gender equality).”

Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 24).

### *Economy*

The objective of the sector policy is to improve income opportunities for poor people, especially women; mainly by expanding and improving their access to markets and to



financial services (e.g. savings, credit, insurance). Directive to the economic policy are objectives of financial viability and social and environmental quality in economic production processes.

Three categories of partner organisations are supported:

- financial institutions targeting small-scale producers and entrepreneurs;
- producers' and intermediary organisations focusing at sustainable production;
- organisations and networks active in the field of lobby, training, advice and information services, focusing at the integration of the environmental dimension and social and economic needs and interests of poor people.

### *HTF*

The Hivos-Triodos Fund (HTF) is set up in 1994 as a joint initiative of Hivos and the Triodos Bank. The HTF combines Hivos' development expertise with the banking expertise of the Triodos Bank. The aim of the fund is to provide loans and equity capital to organisations in the South&East and in South Eastern Europe who provide access to financial services to poor people.

“Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 26).

## Environment and Sustainable Development:

The objective of the sector policy is to support sustainable development by reinforcing the sustainable management of natural resources, the sustainable management of natural or production system biodiversity, and the productive capacity of ecosystems. A major part of the policy focuses at the development of production processes that conserve, restore, or at least do not negatively affect the ecosystems stability and variety of genes and species, the diversity of biological processes, and important habitats.

Two categories of partner organisations are being supported:

- the environmental movement: organisations active in lobby, awareness-raising, research, environmental campaigns and environmental legislation;
- producers organisations active in sustainable production processes, and service organisations in the field of technical information, improving market access, certification, etc.

“Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 26).



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## Gender, Women and Development:

The objective of the sector policy is to promote the emancipation and empowerment of women in order to achieve gender equality at all levels of society. Empowerment is operationalised in five interrelated dimensions: material well-being, access to resources and opportunities, self-esteem and equal rights, participation and decision-making, control over resources and benefits and self-determination.

Implementation is based on a three track strategy:

- support to women's organisations aiming to strengthen the economic, social, political, legal and cultural rights and position of women and their participation in decision-making processes. Special attention goes to organisational strengthening and institutional development of women's organisations in order to enhance their effectiveness;
- support to the mainstreaming of gender equality objectives and strategies into the internal and external policy and programmes of mixed partner organisations;
- support to the mainstreaming of gender equality objectives and strategies into the other Hivos sectoral policy domains, as gender equality is a cross-cutting objective.

“Civil Voices on a Global Stage”, Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 26).

## Information and Communications Technology:

*ICT broadening the international horizon...*

The growing needs and opportunities to address international dimensions of poverty and inequality, and the fast development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have induced Hivos to gradually broaden its horizon towards further internationalisation and to review its range of activities. This has resulted in a further diversification of Hivos' core activities and the choice to invest more in lobby – internationally and in the Netherlands -, in knowledge sharing, and in ICT itself.

*.....though still dominated by the richer countries*

ICT's have the potential to open up unprecedented opportunities for developing countries and the vast majority of poor people around the world. There are opportunities to 'leapfrog' over certain stages of economic development, to improve education levels and to support actions for social justice and human rights. But despite these potential



opportunities current developments are moving in the opposite direction. Most developing countries are lacking essential conditions to take advantage of these new technologies and the 'owners' of ICT are predominantly big players from rich countries. They - not the poor - are setting the agenda and the standards, which leads to unequal access to political decision-making. Because ICT seems very promising for non-traditional and more self-controlled forms of development, Hivos supports a wide range of ICT-related activities. They will be further developed in the years to come.

### *...international political lobby vital to global justice*

Hivos has always supported lobby and advocacy activities of partner organisations in the South & East and world-wide. However, lobby in the global centres of economic and political power - all located in the North - is urgently needed to realise goals of global justice and sustainability. Negotiations and decisions at this level have a major impact on the living conditions and opportunities of people in the South & East. Hivos considers itself part of the growing global civil movement that tries to influence opinion-forming and decision-making. Its role in this movement is both indirect – supporting its partners world wide to voice their positions, as well as direct - voicing its own vision, based on its specialist knowledge and contacts, together with like-minded actors. In the choice of lobby issues Hivos links up with national and international civil and political agendas.

### *...information and knowledge as tools to influence development*

Access to information and knowledge is a major condition for marginalised people to influence the very processes that determine their lives. In a broader sense, access to information and knowledge are essential conditions for democracy. Knowledge is more than information: it is information 'processed' and coloured by experience, vision, context, culture, emotion and reflection. All knowledge is value-based, and 'mainstream' knowledge development is largely dominated by Northern concepts and interests. Access to information, and access to alternative visions and communication networks – facilitated by ICT - offer opportunities for self-determined development.

Facilitating access to and exchanging knowledge has always been a part of Hivos' practice. Further development of knowledge sharing and investment in ICT tools are important for two reasons: ICT offers new opportunities, both technically and in programme development; and Hivos itself has new needs, as it puts more emphasis on strategies of lobby and linking & networking.

**"Civil Voices on a Global Stage", Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 30).**



### *Hivos: embracing innovation and not afraid to experiment*

Hivos has the explicit wish to be innovative in its activities and strategies. Not for the sake of innovation itself, but because it is part of its identity, and because it's a necessity for a small actor that wants to make a difference and likes to have a distinct profile. Innovation is seen as a continuous process of invention, experimentation and the adoption of new themes, products and approaches as long as they fit in Hivos' overall goal and strategy. Innovation should result in new themes and activities as well as in the raising of quality standards. Innovation power and learning capacities need a culture of knowledge sharing. To create such a culture will be one of Hivos' priorities in the coming years. In the allocation of its resources Hivos has always created room and flexible opportunities for new and sometimes risky initiatives, and it will continue to do so.

"Civil Voices on a Global Stage", Hivos Policy Paper, 2002. (Pg. No. 31).

In India Hivos commissioned a study mentioned below and this present study is a sequel to it.

*A Revisit to India's Voluntary Sector a Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period", Position Paper IV, October 2001.*

1. The view that non governmental organizations (NGOs) are key actors in civil society in charge of human freedom, dignity and development has come to be recognised the world over. These people-oriented collectivities-non-profit, self governing and non-governmental - are involved in activities that have been neglected or jettisoned by the state. Government, multilateral development agencies and the public increasingly acknowledge their indispensability in human affairs at large. This global phenomenon of a quantitative leap in NGOs has been linked to four crises, a linkage which appropriately characterizes the Indian situation as well. These four crises are; failure of development and welfare bureaucracies to meet expectations of the people, the crisis of development after oil shocks and recession in the seventies, growing consciousness of looming environmental crisis in the eighties and the crisis of socialism in the nineties.
2. Despite the presence of strong and vibrant voluntary sector, there has not been any systematic long-term study on NGOs in this country. This study is a short revisit to India's voluntary sector with a view to examine its various formations and organizational systems, priority areas of work, its impacts and its linkages with domestic and foreign development agencies. Using the information available from



a variety of secondary sources, it attempts to present comprehensive overview of the NGHIO sector today. The study also identifies the main gaps in the information available on this sector and its contribution to development goals and civil society building and proposes an action plan to overcome these gaps.

3. In India, there has been a long history of voluntary work based on its pietistic and philanthropic traditions and institutions. There was a re-emergence of these tendencies in the wake of Indian risorgimento in the late nineteenth century and a long non-violent freedom struggle. When Indian became independent, there was a new sense of mission in the voluntary sector to promote community development and welfare. In the post-Independence period the NGO sector has grown steadily with extensive support of the state that has sought active involvement of 'people's institutions' in official programmes, while at the same time being uncomfortable with certain cause-oriented NGOs. Ironically, however, the failure of the state in upholding people's rights and ensuring their welfare spurred and engendered a large number of people's movement, social action groups and radical NGOs who started working for conscientisation of the marginalised sections of the population.

Various attempts have been made to develop a comprehensive typology of voluntary organizations in the country. This study develops a typology according to the structure and function of the NGOs and further suggests that NGOs can also be categorized according to the ideological and motivational basis of those who set up the NGOs.

Excerpts from the "A Revisit to India's Voluntary Sector a Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period", Hivos Position Paper IV, October 2001.

The following typology by structure and function of NGOs has been proposed in this study:

- (1) Development Organizations
- (2) Community-based organizations and self help groups (SHGs)
- (3) Intermediary organizations
- (4) Corporate-sponsored organizations
- (5) Support Organizations



- (6) Civil and Democratic Rights and Empowerment Organizations
- (7) Mobilizing Organizations
- (8) Membership Organizations and Professional/Occupational Associations
- (9) Networking Federations
- (10) Caste-based, Traditional and Religious Associations

In terms of the ideological and motivational basis of voluntary work, there has been a marked shift from the traditional idealism to professionalism and/or opportunism in the ideas and actions characterizing voluntary work.

4. One of the consequences of lack of comprehensive and reliable data on the voluntary sector in the country is that the very size of the sector is not known accurately. There is no reliable way of estimating that accurate number of voluntary organizations in the country. The diverse nature of organizations, formal and non-sector, which includes registered and non-registered organizations, formal and non-formal organizations, local and international groups, as well as the large number of dormant and sometimes even fraudulent organizations complicates the estimation of the number of NGOs. It is therefore virtually impossible, at any point of time, to arrive at reliable figures of the number of voluntary organizations in the country. Nevertheless, various directories published over the years and information from government sources, such as the number of NGOs registered under the Foreign contributions Regulations Act, 1976, and other estimates help us arrive at an intelligent estimate of the number of operative NGOs (particularly of development oriented NGOs) in the country. As per this estimate, the number of NGOs existing in the country today and broadly dealing with development issues is anything between one to five lakhs. The distribution of NGOs among different states, and, in the case of a few sample states, the district wise distribution, is also examined based on the existing data.
5. Using the existing data available, an attempt has been made to examine the priority sectors of work of NGOs in the country. Rural Development and Environment emerge as the area of uppermost concern 15.7 percent for the environment. A little over 12 per cent of the NGOs carry out advocacy and citizenship building activities and 11.6 per cent work in the population sector. Technology development and transfer is carried out by only 7.5 percent of the organizations in the sample. Despite



the ever-growing emphasis on empowerment of women, less than seven per cent of the NGOs are presently working for both women and children development. In the sectors of Health/Nutrition, Economic Development and Policy, Water/Sanitation, and Energy only 5.5, 3.7, 3.5, and 1.1 per cent of the organizations are working respectively. Only 2.3 per cent NGOs work for the disabled/handicapped.

6. The NGOs in the country attempt to ensure their short-term and long-term financial sustainability by generating funds from a variety of sources. These include membership fees and donations, central and state government grants in the form of extra-mural (sponsored) projects and core support grants, short term and long term funding by foreign donors/charities and international agencies, assistance from business houses, sales of publications and rent from land and buildings.

A detailed analysis of existing data for a sample of four states shows that only 31.8 per cent of the NGOs take funds from foreign sources, and among these over half the NGOs take the funds from NGOs and religious sources. On the other hand, an average of 56.9 per cent of the NGOs take funds from various Indian sources, and the distribution of different kinds of sources is quite even. Each type of source, namely central and state governments, donations, membership fees and other sources, is accessed by over 50 percent of the NGOs in the sample. The various government schemes and departments which make funds available to NGOs have been enumerated.

Excerpts from the "A Revisit to India's Voluntary Sector a Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period", Hivos Position Paper IV, October 2001.

It is also notable that despite a wide range of funding sources, very few NGOs in the country have adequate financial or infrastructural resources of their own. Thus many NGOs are heavily dependent on project funds. Nevertheless, some of the small and committed NGOs are able to carry out significant work in their area of operation.

7. The inflow of foreign funds to NGO sector during the 1990s has been increasing over the years. While during 1991-92 the increase was as high as 49 per cent over the previous year, during 1992-1999 the average annual increase was about 13.5 per cent. The foreign funds received by the NGO sector during 1998-99 were Rs.3402.90 crores while the average annual funding per year was Rs.2220 crores during the 1990s. In per capita terms this amounts to an average funding of



approximately only Rs.24.50 per annum during the nineties. For 1998-99, the per capita foreign funds received by the NGO sector was Rs.34, or approximately USD 0.87. The overall development assistance received by India during the nineties ranged from USD two to three per capita per annum. Thus the funds received by the NGO sector are about a third of the total foreign aid received by the country.

In the year 1998-99, the NGO sector received foreign contributions from 135 countries. The top 25 donor countries accounted for Rs.3304 crores or more than 97 per cent of the total inflow of foreign contributions to the country during this year. However, if we consider major foreign donor agencies (as against countries of origin), the top 25 donor agencies during the year 1998-99 accounted for only 23 per cent of the total foreign funding to the NGO sector, indicating a wide dispersal of funding among donors. Among these major donors, eight were from the United Kingdom, seven from the USA, five from Germany, three from the Netherlands and two from Spain.

In terms of the region-wise distribution of foreign funds available to NGOs, the southern region had the highest number of NGOs (6372) receiving contributions from foreign donors. This region received the highest amount of foreign contribution (Rs.1662.41 crores), accounting for 48.9 per cent of the total foreign funds. The region was followed by the Northern region (21.5 per cent) and the Western region (13.8 per cent). The average annual funding per NGO was also the highest in the case of Southern region and the least in the case of the Central region.

In terms of the main activities for which the foreign donations were made available during the year 1998-99, 29 activities accounted for about 75 per cent of the total funding. The highest amount was received for activities connected with health and family welfare (Rs.407.91 crores), followed by the rural development (Rs.380.29 crores) and help for the poor, aged and destitute (Rs.271.95 crores). Examining the sector-wise distribution of foreign funds, it is seen that welfare of the poor, health care and family welfare, rural development, infrastructure development and religious programmes and activities are the core areas. Other areas, including education/literacy and environment programmes seem to be low in the priority of the donors.

8. In recent years, for the NGOs, both domestic and international, the environment has become highly favourable. Since the 1990s, liberalisation, globalisation and new conservatism clearly have dominated the development debate. The debate has resulted in a package which consists of liberal democracy, decentralisation, private



initiatives (of which NGOs are principal element) and markets. Thus, over the years, for the central and state governments, NGOs have become far more useful than their own agencies in carrying out social programmes and relief work. NGOs provide to governments an easy route to deliver development programmes, to solve complex development situations on the ground and to prepare the prospective beneficiaries of various programmes. However, while the government creates a vast space for the NGOs to carry out 'voluntary' development work to help the marginalised sections of the population, this work is not voluntary in the true sense of the term. The NGOs merely act as public service contractors or as links between government and people in implementing various development programmes.

Excerpts from the "A Revisit to India's Voluntary Sector a Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period", Hivos Position Paper IV, October 2001.

However, development NGOs have not met with great success in making a significant mark on the development scene. Many programmes carried out by them over the last few decades could not reach the stage of becoming financially self-sustaining, being fully managed by the target communities and being able to survive amidst external market forces. In other words, these programmes exist only so long as they are subsidised. Although a few programmes can be considered successful when evaluated against these criteria, their coverage is limited and such projects have not spread widely or been replicated in a number of other locations. One glaring failure of these NGOs is in reaching out to the poorest of the poor and mobilising them against the odds of caste, gender and other structural bases of inequality and poverty.

This assessment is confirmed by a recent study that ranked the areas of work of NGOs by the level of success of the interventions by them in the country. This ranking showed that NGOs have contributed the most as present groups on government policies and programmes, in women's issues and environmental issues. At times, they have activated the state apparatus through the interventions of the judiciary by presenting well-timed and well-argued Public Interest Litigation (PILs). But their role in improving the living conditions of the poor through development and transfer of technologies is only marginal.

Thus, in recent decades 'voluntarism' has acquired a strong institutional and professional base in India and the NGO constituency has grown incredibly diverse,



reflecting the plural and democratic nature of Indian society. During the last decade or so, this sector has expanded rapidly with growing recognition and financial support from the Indian government, multilateral and bilateral agencies and a large number of non-governmental or quasi-governmental foreign donors. And yet only a handful of big NGOs (the number may not be more than a few dozen) have received significant national and international attention in terms of the visibility of their work and its impact on the ground. In the pyramidal hierarchy which characterizes this sector, these elite NGOs seem to have an aura of their own, while the majority of medium and small voluntary groups organisations and host of people's cultural forums remain largely unnoticed. Their contribution towards strengthening of civil society is least understood and appreciated.

9. The study concludes by noting the current priority areas of action-both overall and sectoral-for NGOs and recommending the setting up of a National NGO-Donor Partnership Information Management System to address the information gaps regarding the size, outreach and the activities of the country's NGO sector and its contribution towards strengthening the civil society institutions and mobilising people towards their socio-economic emancipation and empowerment.

Excerpts from the "A Revisit to India's Voluntary Sector a Study of its Typology, Size, Funding and Role in the Post-Liberalisation Period", Hivos Position Paper IV, October 2001.



**Abstract:** The main goals of this proposed study on contemporary developments and debates in civil society building in India is to provide:

- a. An overview of the analytical debate regarding the role of state, civil society organisations and markets in social development at present in India and also cast an analysis in the global setting.
- b. Review of recent literature on civil society building which includes select evaluation studies conducted or commissioned by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, academic and scholarly writings on similar developmental interventions, and an overview of contemporary debates on the concept of civil society.
- c. A rudimentary analysis of the changing nature of language in development interventions and people's participation.

The expected output of the study is as follows:

1. A study report not exceeding 50 typed pages which would be provided both in printed and soft copies including a PDF version.
2. A short glossary of terms.
3. Documentation of relevant bibliographic material, including in digital format wherever possible.
4. Assisting Hivos in provision of all material to all users including training programmes in human rights and human development.



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*Sitharamam Kakarala*



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is an attempt at ‘decoding’ the recent imaginations of Civil Society Building (CSB) in the mainstream development theory and policy literature, with a view to analyse their potential for ‘democratic empowerment.’ Development studies always engaged with the questions of poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor and the dispossessed. The last decade however witnessed some of the most rapid changes in the development policy, including a growing convergence at the macro-level policy and emergence of a uniform vocabulary. The paper attempts at a scrutiny of those developments and broadly argues that, first, that beneath the visible convergence at the macro-level policy, the current imaginations of developmental studies tend to be guided by neo-liberal ideology, which contribute to a radical redefinition of many categories central to developmental studies; second, such a redefinition of the central categories could have potentially strong implications for (a) visions of ‘alternatives’ in development, (b) possibilities of democratising development theory and practice in general, and (c) for the future of democracy in the developing countries itself.

The argument of the paper is extended in three parts. The first part tries to show that while the mainstream developmental policy of 1990s takes sufficient care in presenting itself as more ‘humane’ through its proclaimed commitment to halving poverty by the year 2015, it simultaneously marginalises alternative voices in developmental theory and policy and thereby effectively reducing the spaces for pluralism in developmental thought and practice.

The second part looks at closely the idea of CSB, which has evolved as the core strategy of the mainstream development policy during 1990s. The paper argues that the nature and meaning of CSB during the decade of 1990s has transformed so significantly that it has little left in common with the original idea. The paper highlights two broad themes. First, that the original idea of CSB was invariably related to some notion of political power, wherein the empowerment demands were placed vis-a-vis the state (citizenship enhancement), the institution ultimately responsible for providing justice. Such a view however came under challenge when many scholars — from and on third world — tended to argue that civil society in many post-colonial societies does not carry the same character and potential of democratisation as it did in the West. A further challenge to the idea of CSB emerged in the 1990s when most states in the post-colonial societies ‘lost’ their ability to regulate markets and new powerful economic actors emerged on the scene. In such a scenario, ‘citizenship enhancement’ should ideally not confine to only empowerment vis-a-vis the state but should encompass empowerment vis-a-vis the



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market (represented by the powerful new economic actors). The post-1990s imaginations of CSB, however, do not conceptualise civil society as contesting the state and the market for democratisation; they visualise civil society as a collaborator with the market and the state. Such an imagination is a serious departure from the existing theorizations of civil society and begs many questions as to the prudence of conceptualising the symmetry of state-market-civil society existing in collaborative equilibrium and with consensus. The second theme of part two attempts at decoding the concrete strategies of CSB in current mainstream developmental policy with a view to understand their potential for catalysing democratic change. The paper reviews the strategies of participation/decentralisation, creating social capital and 'communitarianism' and tries to show first, that despite their reference to the 'local' these strategies have very little to do with the context-specificity, second, that the underlying philosophy of all these strategies is not so much respect for 'pluralism' but an imagination of universality of rational (economic) choice, and third, contrary to the claims made, these strategies do not remedy the gross errors of the modernisation paradigm in dealing with the questions of cultural pluralism in the past, but actually recreate a new modernisation utopia guided by neo-liberal developmentalism.

In the light of the preceding analysis, the final part highlights two broad areas of concern. First that the philosophical value-framework of developmentalism of 1990s tends to be guided by some kind of consequentialism (which in turn is guided by the ideas of 'market necessity' and 'market efficiency') thereby potentially coming in conflict with the human rights-entitlements based conceptualisations of empowerment guided by deontology (which in turn is guided by a belief that nothing is adequate, however significant its 'value' could otherwise be, to disrespect human dignity). Second, more concretely, that the 1990s developmentalism has, at least in the developing countries, already paved the way for a new politics of clientalism, which has potentially damaging implications for the future of democracy. A fundamental lesson for those who are concerned with catalysing democratic empowerment through development is, therefore, to engage with the issues of genuine cultural sensitivity, real 'alternatives' in developmental thought, and resisting appropriation of languages.



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# The Challenge of Democratic Empowerment

The very essence of development studies is a normative preoccupation with the poor, marginalized and exploited people in the South. In this sense, it should be in the first place *inequality* rather than *diversity* or *difference* that is the main focus for development studies: inequality of access to power, to resources, to a human existence — in short, inequality in emancipation (emphasis in original).

— Schuurman (2001: 9)

When Godfrey Wilson wrote his ‘Essay on the Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia’ in 1941, he considered that the Africans of Northern Rhodesia had just entered into an economically and culturally interconnected ‘world society’, a ‘huge world-wide community’ within which they would soon find a place for themselves as something more than peasants and unskilled workers.

— Ferguson (2002: 138)

## 1. Introduction: The Irony of ‘Development’

A decade ago a series of critical contributions in development studies (Sachs 1993; Esteva 1993; Escobar 1994) pronounced the ‘end of development’, both in terms of the gross failure of the modernisation project in delivering material prosperity—let alone holistic well-being—to vast numbers of people, and growing scepticism about the inevitability of evolutionary ‘progress’. There is no doubt that these influential works represented powerful critical perspectives on the unachievable (or, to put it more sharply, the implicitly violent) nature of ‘development’. However, I submit that viewing it against the backdrop of twentieth century’s experience would illuminate a different dimension. Often characterised as a century of paradoxes, some of its most powerful ‘ideas’—equality (gender, racial, social), development, human rights, democracy, etc. — were defined not in terms of their positive ‘realisation’, but the distinct ‘lack’ thereof. In other words, the momentum and motivation for engagement with these ideas came from the grim reality of their absence or violation. For example, the twentieth century witnessed perhaps the most detailed cataloguing of human rights standards (Brownlie 2001; UN 2002). At the same time, it is in the same century that the most heinous and inhumane violations of human rights took place. As Sluka (2000) points out, even going by a rather conservative estimate,



between 1900 and 1999 nearly 300 million people lost their lives, directly or indirectly, at the hands of their respective states. Similarly, I suggest that 'development' in the twentieth century was defined more in terms of its non-achievement: abject poverty, lack of access to livelihood, inhumane living conditions, and a general absence of well-being.

During the last decade, the 'end of development' thesis came under a new challenge—while the hope for 'alternative' forms of 'development' declined sharply, newer and more sophisticated forms of hyper-modernisation utopia acquired currency among political and economic elites in many parts of the developing world. These elites continued to be haunted by the dream—albeit in newer incarnations—of 'catching up' with progress (out there): if, in the 1940s, the modernisation utopia was animated by fantasies of 'detribalization' (Ferguson 2002), it resurfaced in the reconceptualisations of 'communitarianism' at the beginning of the twenty-first century (World Bank 2000a, 2002). Thus, the pronouncement about the 'end of development' need not and should not lead us to disengage with development studies.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it should be considered as providing an intellectually challenging and stimulating opportunity to critically engage with the project of studying 'development' in the context of globalisation and the dynamics of change with regard to the discourse surrounding the current forms of its 'lack.'

An important and useful vantage point for engaging with development studies in the 1990s would be to revisit their avowed core concern: democratic empowerment of the poor and marginalised. In the absence of an established consensus on the nature and meaning of democratic empowerment,<sup>2</sup> the approach within development studies generally tends to emphasise strategies of 'civil society building' (CSB): strategies that facilitate 'citizenship' (or political) opportunities and enhancement of democratic participation, and strategies that address the needs and concerns of the economically and socially disadvantaged.

Over the last decade mainstream development studies have consistently focused on poverty eradication or reduction, with CSB emerging as a core strategy of the poverty reduction initiatives taken during this time. The CSB strategy claims, as the bottom line, that long-term, sustainable reduction in poverty levels depends upon 'empowering the poor'. Such a broad claim is unlikely to generate serious disagreements, for reduction of poverty through empowering the poor is broadly agreeable to many, if not most. The difficulty, however, arises when we begin to unfold the meaning and nature of this apparently common phraseology, as it leads us to the ambiguous terrain of competing visions of 'development' and 'empowerment'.

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1. In fact, even the radical critiques of development studies, at least some of them, have the aim, among others, to bring more 'modesty' into the thought process on the social engineering of development rather than outright rejection. See, generally, Ferguson (1994; 2002); Scott (1999).
  2. The current and past debates on what constitutes 'decolonisation' or 'emancipation' in our times could throw some light on the complexity of this issue. See, generally, Parekh and Pieterse (1995); Pieterse (1992).
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It is against this backdrop that the present paper attempts to engage with the ambitious task of ‘decoding’ the core strategies of mainstream development discourse since the beginning of 1990s, with a view to understanding the nature and meaning of the ‘old’ vocabularies and their ‘new’ interpretations, as well as their implications for re-imagining democratic development. It does not, however, claim to provide or even indicate a blueprint of what exactly constitutes ‘democratic empowerment’, for all attempts at providing blueprints tend to hegemonise the discourse and are thus inherently incapable of generating democratic ideas. Rather, the paper suggests that a meaningful way of engaging with the problem at hand would be to critically analyse both the visible and the not-so-visible in development discourse, which would in turn help us ‘decode’ their implications for the realisation of the larger goal of development studies, i.e., to contribute to a just and democratic social order.

The paper is broadly divided into three parts. Part one presents an overview of the major trajectories of mainstream development policy and suggests that at the policy level, the 1990s witnessed a gradual decline of pluralism in thought and space for ‘alternatives’. Part two has two sub-sections: the first deals with a review–analysis of the civil society debate in development studies, and the second deals with the core strategies of the CSB process. I argue that the conceptualisations of civil society in mainstream development literature tend to be instrumentalist, at times even simplistic, and rarely acknowledge the contributions of the larger body of academic literature. I further argue that a hesitation to engage with the definitions rigorously could be viewed as a potentially useful strategy to sustain incoherence in the discourse in order to navigate the difficult process of invoking the ‘old’ vocabularies of democratic theory to forge a neoliberal model of development. I substantiate these arguments with a close review of core CSB strategies, viz., creating social capital and designing community-driven development (CDD). Finally, in the third part of this paper, I conclude by indicating that current CSB interventions could, even if one were to take the poverty reduction claims at face value, have serious negative implications for the larger democratising process, for such interventions tend to forge, reasonably unequivocally, a new clientelist politics, wherein the citizen-empowerment framework is gradually replaced by a consumer/client-empowerment framework.

## 2. Developmentalism Before the Current Wave of Globalisation

It has been argued that developmentalism, i.e., belief in the possibility of ‘progress’ that could be socially engineered, is distinctly related to the conceptions of ‘modernity’ (Albrow 2001; Tornquist 1999; Ferguson 2002). It is, therefore, also very closely linked to such central categories of modernity as industrialism, commodification, planning and democracy/democratisation. A major preoccupation of scholars of post-War development studies has thus been to understand the social bases of democracy, including its ‘economic pre-requisites’ (Moore 1967; Huntington 1965, 1968; Almond and Verba 1963; Diamond *et al.* 1989; Lipset 1993). In his seminal



study, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Barrington Moore (1967) argued that agrarian societies are more prone to dictatorships. Scholars of the 'Political Development School' in the United States tended to claim that the firm establishment of liberal democratic institutions—parliamentary institutions, judicial institutions and bureaucratic structures of administration—would eventually lead to the transformation of post-colonial African and Asian countries into liberal democratic societies (Huntington 1965, 1968). Similarly, many post-colonial states inherited mandates of 'social justice' which evolved from the anti-colonial discourse of politics and practice, and expressly recognised the issue of poverty, first, as a major challenge to the 'nation building' process—in terms of not only forging a unified identity but of also fostering civic spaces as sites of active citizenship performance (Kothari 1970; Rudolph and Rudolph 1989), and second, as causally related to colonialism (Kalpagam 2000). It might be worth mentioning here that it was around the same time that the European welfare state emerged.

Post-War developmentalism was thus erected around a certain set of paradigms: the centrality of a developmental state, the twin mandates of national building and social justice delivery, and a belief in the possibility of progress through social engineering. This framework was firmly in place during the 1960s, 1970s and a greater part of the 1980s, which saw broadly two (competing) perspectives of development in operation: one represented by the approaches of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the other represented by the UN, a few select bilateral donors from Europe and a host of Northern civil society donor organisations.

The policies followed by the IFIs, popularly referred to as the 'Washington Consensus', emphasised, *inter alia*, market deregulation and liberalisation as preconditions for development; multilateral agencies like the World Bank (Stiglitz 1998), on the other hand, actively pursued the belief that lack of capital was the main cause of underdevelopment/poverty in the South.<sup>3</sup> The focus of the Washington Consensus during this time was on building a state-level 'consensus' on the dominant conception of 'development' through a process of economic and legal reforms from above. Whether these packages of 'Structural (Adjustment) Reforms' were actually in favour of the South was a controversial issue that was widely debated and contested.<sup>4</sup> However,

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3. For a general overview of the idea, see Gore (2000). For a more critical analysis, see Naim (2000); Gills and Philip (1996).

4. Critiques of the claims of the Structural Adjustment packages often cited evidence from within the Brettonwoods Institutions to indicate that the primary motive of the reforms was not the development of the South but, rather, profits for the Institutions. In this context, it would be worthwhile to glance at a speech made by Robert McNamara as President of the World Bank, to get an idea of what constituted the core of World Bank philosophy at the beginning of the Washington Consensus:

Few people understand the Bank (it is often confused with the IDA); fewer still have any conception of its financial structure, liquidity, profitability, guarantees, the repayment record of its borrowers, or the quality of its lending operations... *We are not a social welfare agency committed to making transfer payments to solve the problems of misery or poverty.* We are a development bank using the most sophisticated techniques available to facilitate development, while providing unmatched protection and strength for creditors and shareholders (Rotberg 1981: 33–34, as cited in Hayter and Watson 1985: 77–78).



it was only after the recent and largely internal critique of the reforms packages<sup>5</sup> that the earlier critique acquired better weight.

The second perspective, on the other hand, drew its inspiration from a variety of sources: the UN Charter, which emphasised the sovereign equality of states and a collective obligation of the international community to foster social development<sup>6</sup> (resulting in three UN Development Decades—the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s); the constitutional mandates evolved during the anti-colonial struggles of the post-colonial South<sup>7</sup>; the social–democratic experience of a few European donors, particularly the Nordic countries and the Netherlands (Stokke 1989); the collective experiences of Northern civil society, viz., labour, women’s and green movements; and third world social movements that emphasised the grassroots, needs-based mobilisation of people and their participation in decision-making processes as ‘equal partners’ to facilitate ‘equitable development’; and, finally, the then emergent rethinking of development theory (Schumacher 1973). The core aim was to achieve development that was equitable, democratic (i.e., empowering) and needs based. The practical experience and results of this experiment, however, represent a mixed bag.<sup>8</sup>

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5. The most recent critiques can be seen in the writings of Joseph Stiglitz, former Senior Vice-President of the World Bank, and Ravi Kanbur, who, before his controversial resignation, was the Principal Consultant for the 2000 World Development Report on Poverty. See Stiglitz (1998); Kanbur (1998).

6. Article 55 of the UN Charter reads:

With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:

- a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development;
- b. solutions of international economic, social, health, and related problems; and international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- c. universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

7. Part IV of the Constitution of India, which deals with the ‘Directive Principles of the State Policy’, was inspired by the social justice aspirations of our anti-colonial struggle.

8. For a brief review of some of these developments, see Fowler (1998).



### 2.1. 'The Great Policy Transformation'

The year 1990 saw the publication of three important documents: *The World Development Report* (WDR); *The Human Development Report* (HDR); and the South Commission's report, *The Challenge to the South*. Though all three focused on the same problem, i.e., poverty/underdevelopment, the approaches they followed were very different. As a response to the widespread criticism of its policies in the preceding years, the WDR made a case for 'adjustment with a human face'. However, the basic policy framework it followed was merely a refinement of the neoliberal framework of development, which de-emphasised the role of the state and emphasised growth based on liberalised markets and investments. The HDR, on the other hand, provided a new framework of 'human development' that, while keeping human needs at the centre, had a corollary thrust on improving quality of life. If the HDR 1990 ushered in the idea of human development, the South Commission Report (SCR) highlighted the 'cultural dimensions' of development. It was critical of the South's technological dependence and blind imitation of the Western model of development at the cost of its own resources of creativity and traditional wisdom and the absolute neglect of the cultural dimensions of development. While recognising the increasing interdependency of the world, the SCR advocated people-centred development and self-reliance.

If this variety in approaches raised hopes of continuing pluralism in developmental policy at the beginning of 1990s, by the second half of the decade the situation had changed drastically on two counts. First, the WDR framework emerged 'victorious', for it could successfully 'accommodate' (or appropriate) the critical vocabularies of the other two approaches without compromising on its core neoliberal framework (World Bank 2000a).<sup>9</sup> By so doing, the think-tanks of the Bank created a whole set of new vocabularies to replace the more familiar existing ones (e.g., social capital, community-driven development and so on). These new vocabularies became the converging platform for all major players in development aid policy. Secondly, the political elite of the South almost conceded, due partly to their own dependence on development aid for their populist politics and partly to the changed priorities of the economic elite, that the nation-building project was unviable. What was needed, instead, was 'civil society building.'

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9. This approach could broadly be termed as 'post-Washington consensus.' Elaborating on the idea, Joseph Stiglitz, former Senior Vice President of the World Bank, said that:

[T]he Washington consensus advocated use of a small set of instruments (including macroeconomic stability, liberalized trade, and privatization) to achieve a relatively narrow goal (economic growth). The post-Washington consensus recognizes both that a broader set of instruments is necessary and that our goals are also much broader. We seek increases in living standards—including improved health and education—not just increases in measured GDP. We seek sustainable development, which includes preserving natural resources and maintaining a healthy environment. We seek equitable development, which ensures that all groups in society, not just those at the top, enjoy the fruits of development. And we seek democratic development, in which citizens participate in a variety of ways in making the decisions that affect their lives (Stiglitz 1998: 30).



It is worth noting that by the second half of the 1990s almost all major donors had reformulated their development goals and policies. There was near unanimity in terms of identified goals and greater convergence on perspectives and approaches for achieving those goals. The DAC guidelines on poverty reduction (DAC 2001) and the International/Millennium Development Goals (IDGs/MDGs) clearly demonstrate such a consensus.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that there were no policy differences between donors, for there were many levels of persisting ambiguities (Kakarala *et al.* 2003). But it is sufficient for our purposes to recognise the emergence of CSB as the core consensus strategy for poverty reduction. In this context it is worth reiterating that CSB was by no means a 'newly' invented strategy of the 1990s, for many Northern civil society groups and some bilateral donors had a longstanding ('old') engagement with it (Fowler 2000a, 2000b). However, the CSB strategy of the late 1990s differed from the earlier strategy on at least two counts: first, while the 'old' strategy was supplementing and thereby strengthening the national constitutional mandates, the 'new' strategy could hardly be described as doing that; second, the actor-focus shifted from citizen empowerment to community empowerment.

It is thus imperative for any inquiry into CSB and its potential to create democratic empowerment to engage with the recent conceptualisations of civil society and the strategic components of its social engineering. In the next section I propose a method for mapping contemporary notions of civil society—from development policy and studies to political theory—and suggest that there is a need for greater interdisciplinary dialogue between the various perspectives on civil society.

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10. The DAC Guidelines say that 'the Guidelines represent an emerging international consensus and a shared commitment and understanding of how to work together more effectively to help developing country partners reduce poverty' (DAC 2001).



### 3. From 'Nation Building' to 'Civil Society Building'

Interest in the concept of civil society is undergoing a remarkable renaissance.

— Helmich and Lemmers (1998: 11)

... [A] new phase in social problem solving and sustainable development has arrived. The key to this new phase is the building of effective partnerships among government, business, and the not for profit sector. We can refer to this new phase as the building of a civil society.

— Bangalore Declaration (1999)

To be clear about the point of 'civil society' is first to be clear about what citizenship can be, about what the state can do, about the point of politics itself.

— Hawthorn (2001: 286)

It should not take long for anyone trying to understand the debates on civil society to realise that there was a 'remarkable renaissance' of the concept during the 1990s. Like gender, civil society was one of the many analytical categories that emerged from the alternative/critical/'peripheral' currents of thought and practice during the post-War period, but were 'mainstreamed' only in the 1990s. However, it is important to note that this 'remarkable renaissance' of civil society cannot be attributed to any single source. It carries with it not only a wide diversity of perspectives, but also a sense of incoherence and imprecision, thereby causing serious ambiguity in its understanding. It may, therefore, be appropriate to begin with a brief restatement of the current context of the debate.

#### 3.1. *A Mapping of the Current Context*

The current debates on civil society have at least five different sources and perhaps dimensions, though some of them do overlap or relate to each other. The first source, and perhaps the loudest in terms of the reach of its voice, consists of multilateral and bilateral donors as represented by the reports/studies published by them or on their behalf (Bernard *et al.* 1998; Carothers 1999; World Bank 2000a, 2001; World Bank-OED 2003; UNDP 1993, 1995, 2000; SGTs & Associates 2000; USAID 1998; OECD 1998). This source employs the concept in a rather reductionist manner, often referring to it as a self-evident idea or reducing it to a set of institutional forms that are not related to or associated with the state, market or family. The second dominant source is the literature produced by Northern academics and policy think-tanks, who seem to have recognised, somewhat suddenly, the massive decline of civil society in the West during the 1990s (Putnam 1993, 2000; Eberly 2000; Fukuyama 1996, 2000, 2001; Norris 2002). This 'recovery group' tends to view reviving civil society as a remedy for improving



the health of their ailing democracies. The third source is the writings of the Northern and Southern civil society organisations, which were the first to have engaged with the idea of the 'social engineering' of civil society as a building block for democratic transformation in the developing world (de Graaf and Srivastava 2000; BOND 1997; Freiberg-Strauß and Meyer 1999; Naidoo 2003; Oakley *et al.* 1998; HIVOS 2000, 2002; Tandon n.d.; Tandon and Mohanty 2003). The fourth source — rooted in Western political thought — comprises the classic writings on civil society by such philosophers as Hobbes, Locke, Ferguson, Hegel, Tocqueville, Marx and Gramsci, and contemporary engagements with these writings by, for example, Habermas (1995), Cohen and Arato (1992), Keane (1988) and Jenoski (1998). The fifth source is a set of critical reflections and writings by scholars from, and working on, the 'developing world', which attempts to articulate non-Western perspectives on the concept (Kothari 1988; Sheth 1984, 2004; Kaviraj and Khilnani 2001; Chandoke 1995, 2003; Rudolph 2000; Mahajan 2000; Khan 1998; Chatterjee 1997, 1998, 2001; Hann and Dunn 1996; Yoo 2003).

This mapping is, of course, incomplete and could be improved by bringing in new nuances or even by a re-classification. However, for our purposes it is sufficient to note that there appears to be a distinct dearth of cross-fertilisation of ideas amongst these groups, with not much evidence of any real and conscious 'dialogue' between them. In fact, if we imagine a metaphorical 'free market-place of ideas', wherein actors, each according to their capacity, 'propagate' their ideas with a relative disregard for others who are also engaged in a similar exercise, contemporary civil society 'discourse' may very well fit into that image somewhat like a 'gentle pandemonium.'<sup>11</sup> Such a sweeping claim may come as a bit of surprise to those who consider that all references to 'civil society' in contemporary 'discourse' broadly carry the same (good) meaning. A basic attempt of the present paper is to highlight the near lack of 'dialogue' between different groups in civil society discourse and the potential implications of this for the creative processes of democratic transformation. However, for want of space, our analysis is largely confined to the writings that comprise the first source.

Engagement with CSB as a process acquires further significance when we consider that the social engineering of civil society, popularly referred to as 'civil society building', was a major thrust area of the poverty reduction strategies during the 1990s.<sup>12</sup> Sizeable amounts of money

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11. It must be mentioned, however, that there is a growing interest in bridging the gap between what Jenkins (2001) called the realms of political theory and developmental studies. Besides Jenkins, Williams and Young (1994) and Currie (2001) serve as useful illustrations of the trend.

12. There is growing ambiguity as to the name of the 'sector', for the funding often happens through cross-sectoral projects ranging from 'economic restructuring', 'poverty reduction' and 'democracy and governance' to 'community-driven development'. Two variants of the global policy thrust can be seen in the World Bank (2000a) and UNDP (2000).



were pumped into the civil society 'sector' for a variety of purposes, such as building 'community' infrastructure, encouraging the formation of 'user groups' of various kinds — water, education, self-help — and/or forging administrative reforms that would make the governing structures more responsive and transparent. A recent World Bank–OED (2003) study indicates that between 1990 and 2003<sup>13</sup> the Bank supported 833 projects the world over, which are linked, directly or indirectly, to poverty reduction and community-driven development (CDD). In fact, it supported such projects to the tune of \$21 billion in India alone (*ibid.*: 59). Similarly, the World Bank's collaboration with civil society organisations grew from a mere 10 per cent of its total projects in 1990 to a significant 40 per cent in 2001 (World Bank 2001: 4).

There is yet another reason why the concept of civil society needs closer reflection and analysis in our times. From the seventeenth century onwards, civil society developed into an important analytical category in modern political thought as part of an effort to understand the nature of political power in the newly evolving European nation–state and the need to 'democratise' its power. Thus civil society is inherently both 'political'—in the sense of being an effective mechanism for democratising political (nation–state) power, and 'territorial'—in the sense of being part of a national constitutional order that is based on the principle of 'we the people'. In other words, 'civil society,' as opposed to 'society' in general, was based on the principle of 'citizen-sovereignty'—citizens as the makers and unmakers of political orders in accordance with the constitutional norms and principles created by *them* and given unto *themselves* (Parekh 1993).<sup>14</sup>

Today, in the context of globalisation, the national constitutional orders and therefore notions about and the power of nation–states to manage their own affairs are under tremendous stress. The 1990s witnessed some of the most far-reaching supra-national agreements that made huge inroads into the national constitutional orders.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the implications of these changes, they have put the concept of citizenship under unprecedented stress—the belief that political power ultimately derives its legitimacy from the people-as-citizens and is thus always fully accountable to them is now under challenge. This brings forth a serious question about the

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13. The number of projects supported under the rubric of 'civil society and democracy' for the same period, as listed by [www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org), is over a thousand.

14. The ultimate spirit of this logic is available in many modern democratic and republican documents, from the Declaration of the American War of Independence and the French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizens to contemporary documents like the United Nations Charter, which begin with the phrase 'we the people ....' The Preamble of the Constitution of India reflects a very similar democratic belief and the spirit, with its invocation of 'We the people of Sovereign, Secular, Socialist, Democratic Republic of India.... Giving this constitution to ourselves....'

15. By now it is fairly well known that agreements such as GATT/WTO have made serious inroads into the national policy-making process, and the economic compulsions of poorer countries often makes them accept the economic restructuring logic of the International Financial Institutions.



potential relevance and capacity of a de facto marginalised civil society to simultaneously contest both the state and the market as a mechanism to 'democratise our times', particularly in the developing world where nation-states are increasingly becoming powerless—not so much vis-à-vis the people within their respective jurisdictions (for many of them are known for 'governmental lawlessness'), but vis-à-vis the states in the North and the International Economic Institutions, both of which acquired a greater degree of influence on public policy in the developing world.

### 3.2. 'Civil Society' in the Development Policy Literature

The place of civil society in development policy literature was not recent, though it had certainly acquired a 'new' meaning by the late 1990s. While in the pre-1990s context the idea of civil society was seen as a vehicle of democratic transformation, emphasising the idea of a self-determined citizen seeking efficient and accountable (constitutional) politics, the post-1990s scenario de-emphasised the role of state (and also constitutions) and replaced it with 'civil society' (Schuurman 2001; Berger and Neuhaus 2000). Thus, in the post-1990s sense, civil society no longer seeks to make the state accountable; instead, it aims to facilitate the replacement of the existing 'state-spaces' by private actors from within.

Civil society figured in the development policies of the 1970s and 1980s in the context of building 'partnerships' between the Northern and Southern civil society organisations, mainly NGOs, with a view to fostering a common understanding on issues such as poverty and marginalisation based on principles of equality and autonomy (Fowler 1998: 141; Cornwall 2000: 17–30). In other words, the CSB project of the 1970s and 1980s was an engagement to catalyse processes that could potentially help crystallise the citizenship rights of the poor and marginalised. Critiques of that period generally relate to its failure in forging such value-based 'partnerships' in a big way (Fowler 1998), and/or its failure to combat and mitigate the exclusionary tendencies that emerged in local participatory processes (Cornwall 2000).

The post-1990s developmental policy literature, however, did not have a single or unified approach to civil society. Broadly, two approaches seem to have emerged: one represented by the *Human Development Report*, the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, and the other by the World Bank and the Anglo-Saxon countries. While the former approach is characterised by a broad continuity of the spirit and values of the previous decades, with an enhanced emphasis on developing 'rights-based approaches' to poverty reduction (UNDP 2000; GTZ 1999; SIDA 1999, 2002; HIVOS 1996, 2002; Udsholt 1996), the latter is characterised by a new kind of imagination that visualises CSB as an integral part of 'making globalisation work for the poor' (World Bank 2000a; DFID 2000). However, by the late 1990s the demarcation between the two approaches had begun to blur, leading to a somewhat ambivalent convergence.



### 3.3. *Hesitation to engage with 'Definitions'*

One characteristic common to many policy documents is their reluctance to engage with the issue of defining civil society. The majority of them, however, do acknowledge that it is difficult to provide a satisfactory definition, for there are too many of them, with some even contradicting each other. Nevertheless, there is hardly any serious attempt to grapple with the issue, even while arriving at the 'working definitions' that they do.<sup>16</sup> A typical approach followed by such policy documents can be seen in the preface to a recent publication of the OECD Development Centre:

Though the debate about the merits of the concept of civil society continues, it has not delayed the start of practical initiatives to support an active civil society in development co-operation programmes.

Active civil societies are central to the evolution of participatory and transparent systems of government, which are essential for economic development. Civil society, however, is not only another instrument for economic development. The participation of citizens in the definition of their role in society and in the choices affecting the future of their society is an important objective in itself (Bernard *et al.* 1998: 7).

The contrast between the two paragraphs that have been quoted is self-evident. The first talks about the *lack of consensus* on the 'utility' of civil society as an effective concept for development interventions, but contradicts this in the second paragraph by emphasising the *centrality* of the concept for an 'evolution' of some kind of democratic government and for economic development.

While claiming that the definitions of civil society vary because it is an 'emerging' sector and also quite 'varied in its nature and composition' due to variations in country contexts and their histories, the World Bank simultaneously provides us with a working definition:

The World Bank uses the term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations (World Bank-OED 2003).

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16. An exception to this rule is the efforts of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD. There is considerable effort to acknowledge and grapple with some of the grey issues in defining civil society in its policy documents on participatory development (1997).



It is paradoxical that despite the growing centrality of CSB in development aid activity (for reasons outlined in the preceding section), not only does the policy literature continue to carry on with commonsensical 'working definitions', but also tends to de-emphasise the theoretical complexity and nuances of the concept by arguing in favour of a more 'practical' approach.

I think it would be useful here to elaborate on certain nuances contained in the Bank's working definition, since it is perhaps the most widely used in the contemporary literature. First, civil society is generally employed as if it denotes an undifferentiated social fabric and means something inherently positive and good.<sup>17</sup> There is hardly any acknowledgement of intercommunity tensions and contestations, and thus of the dynamics of power relations within civil society.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, the rhetorical references to civil society tend to emphasise the cooperative 'partnership' between the state, market and civil society. While we may view such partnership as desirable, it does not tally in any way with the ground level, where civil society is always in 'contestation' with the other two realms of society.<sup>19</sup> In fact, such a perspective of 'civil society' would be quite antithetical to the understanding in political theory, whether liberal-democratic, Marxist or of any other critical variety (Cohen and Arato 1992; Kaviraj and Khilnani 2001). Thirdly, there is rarely a mention of social movements in the Bank's descriptions of civil society,<sup>20</sup> perhaps owing to the difficulty that it might pose to the conceptualisation of cooperative 'partnership.' This could be one reason why some scholars tend to characterise the Bank's approach to civil society as 'depoliticising', i.e., viewing civil society as an instrumental middle without taking into account the dynamics of power politics not only within it, but also in relation to the state and the market (Harris 2001; Tornquist 1999; Ferguson 1994). Finally, the literature does not help in determining the real democratic potential of the CSB process in contemporary times. It does not account for the declining nation-state and the growing monopolistic power of the dominant actors in the market, and the implications of this for

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17. This is despite the unequivocal statement by the OECD Development Centre study that:

Civil society cannot be considered as inherently beneficial. Organisations in civil society may not fulfill, or may even contradict, our expectation that they will generate positive effects. Therefore, both the internal characteristics of individual organisations and the external conditions that influence them must be taken into account. Management must be both competent and accountable to its membership, and organisations must be willing to co-operate with other actors in seeking systemic reform (Bernard *et al.* 1998: 134).

18. A recent OED study on the poverty reduction interventions of the Bank criticises its approach in 'designing' the poverty reduction programmes as though poverty reduction is a non-political goal and that social relations of power are not an important consideration in the process. See, Van Wicklin III (2002).

19. In the words of Michael Lipton, 'State, market and civil society are *rival* channels for the exercise of power' (1995: 314, as cited in Hawthorn 2001: 277).

20. There are clearly a few exceptions. For instance, HIVOS' perception of civil society is both expressly political as well as inclusive of social movements. It perceives civil society as a contestatory space (HIVOS 2002). Also see Raghuram (1997, 2000) and Raghuram and Ray (2000). For a more general discussion on civil society as a politically contestatory space, see Kaviraj and Khilnani (2001); Tandon and Mohanty (2003).



theorising the role of civil society. Existing theories of civil society make it reasonably clear that it evolved through the struggles against the state's total (monopolistic) control over society and during the nineteenth century, the market actively extended support for such struggles. By the late twentieth century, however, the power of monopolistic market actors had far surpassed the power of nation-states in many developing countries. Civil society therefore acquired the dual burden of struggling against two kinds of monopolies. A moot question here is whether the CSB strategies adopted in mainstream development policy are adequate to equip civil society for this cause. A closer scrutiny of CSB strategies might help us answer this question.

### 4. Decoding the Strategies of New 'Civil Society Building'

#### 4.1. CSB Strategy 1: Creating Social Capital

[A]uthoritarian high-modernist development schemes replace thick, complex, quasi-autonomous social orders (and natural orders too) with thin, simplified, mechanical orders that function badly, even for the limited purposes for which they are designed... They [authoritarian high-modernist schemes] have, often purposely, violated complex human arrangements of sustainable social order that they have no means of understanding.

— Scott (1999: 273, 288)

One of the most projected 'discoveries' of developmental studies in the 1990s was the idea of social capital, which became immensely popular amongst policy-makers and academics alike.<sup>21</sup> While the labyrinth of the ever-expanding body of literature on the subject conveys, at best, a very confusing picture of the concept, it may be worthwhile to recount that the roots of the concept are not entirely new.<sup>22</sup> Its current popularity is generally attributed to the work of Robert Putnam (1993). However, well before Putnam there were two important currents of thought that had tried to conceptualise social capital in drastically different ways. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's work (1977, 1985, 1986) proposed a concept of social capital (in contradistinction to other 'forms' of capital, viz., economic, cultural and symbolic) that helped in understanding the significance of the non-economic in everyday life. Bourdieu's attempt was to show that the social and economic worlds of a human person are not shaped by rational

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21. For discussions on social capital in policy literature, see World Bank (2000b, 2003); OECD and HRDC (2001); UNESCO (2002); Fukuyama (1995; 2000; 2001); Carroll (2001); Woolcock (1998, 2000, 2001, 2002) and Woolcock and Narayan (2000). For academic discussions, see Norris (2002); Boggs (2001); Portes and Landolt (2000); Foley and Edwards (1999); Fine (1999, 2001); Harris (2001). For studies of social capital focusing on the Indian context, see Blomkvist and Swain (2001); Krishna (2003); Mayer (2001); Mohanty (2003); Pai and Narayan (2003).

22. Putnam (1993) suggests that the term was originally used in the urban sociological writings of the 1960s in the US.



(economic) choice ability but by differential access to ‘capital’ in all its forms (Foley and Edwards 1999: 143). It thus served as a critique of mainstream neoclassical economics. The other strand of thinking is attributed to James Coleman’s work (1988, 1993), which was grounded in rational choice theory (Foley and Edwards 1999: 142). The concept of social capital can thus be invoked both by those who are critical of rational choice theory as well as those who affirm it, and it is this that lies at the heart of its ambiguity.

Bourdieu’s concept of social capital was an attempt at developing a ‘general science of economy of practices’ that could ‘explore the conversations that occur between the economic and the non-economic’ (Smart 1993: 388–89). He defined social capital as

[T]he aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu 1986: 228–49).

The phrases ‘collectivity-owned’ and ‘capital as credential’ are important, for it is they that make a person entitled for ‘credit’ in various senses, which by analogy could include emotional support, help in kind, respect, dignity, trust, etc.—none of which are quantifiable in economic terms.

For Coleman, however, social capital was something that cannot be possessed by an individual or be found in any physical structure—it resides in the ‘structure of relations’ between persons. Thus, according to him, social capital is ‘a variety of entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure’ (Coleman 1990: 302, as cited in Foley and Edwards 1999: 143).

The core contribution of Robert Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work* (1993) was to link a particular notion of social capital as essential to the functioning of modern democracy (somewhat similar to the theorisations of civil society as a precondition to the emergence of democracy). Putnam’s work acquired celebrity status among the policy think-tanks in development studies, perhaps partly because his definition was more amenable to rational choice arguments. He defined social capital as ‘...features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives’ (Foley and Edwards 1999: 144). The emphasis on tangible ‘networks’ and ‘actor participation’ kick-started a number of studies on ‘quantifying’ social capital (Norris 2002; Krishna and Uphoff 1999; Krishna 2003; Uphoff and Wijayarathna 2000), as well as some that questioned its measurability (Serra 2001).

What is both interesting and equally intriguing are the trajectories of reductionism by which the complexity and nuances of the concept are either underplayed or largely fudged. Fukuyama



stands as an interesting illustration, though he is not an isolated case, when he emphatically argues that:

Social capital is important to the efficient functioning of modern economies, and is the *sine qua non* of stable liberal democracy. It constitutes the cultural component of modern societies, which in other respects have been organised since the Enlightenment on the basis of formal institutions, the rule of law and rationality (Fukuyama 2001:7).

He goes on to highlight the 'economic functions' of social capital as '(reducing) the transaction costs associated with formal co-ordination mechanisms like contracts, hierarchies, bureaucratic rules, and the like', and '... even in non-hi-tech environments, social capital often leads to greater efficiency than do purely formal co-ordination techniques' (*ibid.*: 10).

He further suggests that the source of capital is the 'prisoners' dilemma game'. Market interactions in a commercial society lead to 'the development of bourgeois virtues like honesty, industriousness and prudence', and a society composed of 'Kant's "rational devils" will develop social capital ... simply as a matter of the devils' long-term self-interest' (*ibid.*: 16). He is equally forthright in his views on the means of enhancing the 'stock of social capital' in developing countries. According to him, the state should serve merely as a facilitator rather than an active agent in the development process; and further, there should be active promotion of religion and globalisation (*ibid.*: 19).

The policy literature of multilateral institutions and the writings of their think-tanks generally tend to present a reductionist and/or romantic orientation in their definitions. Many of the recent multilateral and bilateral official reports claim an unequivocal relationship between building social capital and poverty reduction on the one hand, and democratisation on the other. For the World Bank, creating social capital is a core strategy for empowering the poor:

Social norms and networks are a key form of capital that people can use to move out of poverty. Thus it is important to work with and support networks of poor people and to enhance their potential by linking them to intermediary organizations, broader markets, and public institutions (World Bank 2000: 10).

The latest WDR further identifies that 'higher stocks of social capital' would enhance the voices of the poor for political accountability 'because they help overcome the collective action problem underlying voice, particularly for poor people' (WDR 2003a: 81). Similarly, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) pays glowing tributes to the idea of social capital: 'Those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, solve common problems, resolve disputes, and/or take advantage of opportunities' (Carroll 2001: viii). No doubt there is occasionally an odd mention of the complex situations within which social capital formation



occurs and therefore some need for caution in understanding its role (Oyen 2002). However, such caution neither leads the donors to engage more closely with the serious findings of current independent research, particularly when emanating from developing countries, nor does it prevent them from taking a rather sweepingly romantic view of social capital—a view very similar to the notions of ‘modernisation’ in post-colonial societies during the early post-War period.

### 4.2. *Decoding the Visible and the Invisible*

What do studies of social capital indicate and what can we learn from them? I suggest that the discourse poses certain ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ sets of problems. The visible problems can perhaps be summarised thus: First, from its original ‘cultural’ and non-economic incarnation, social capital is eventually reduced by most ‘measurement’ studies to an ‘asset’ that could help create prosperity. Uphoff and Wijayaratna, for example, argue that, ‘Where people hold complementary norms, values, attitudes and beliefs predisposing them to cooperation and mutual assistance, a valuable set of assets can be created by joint action that is not only productive in the present but into the future’ (2000: 1885). The core presumptions are self-evident: complementary norms and values, predisposed cooperation and assistance. Second, such vision of social capital presumes a romantic view of ‘community’, which is driven by rational choice to cooperate for mutual benefit. Hardly any study alludes to even a remote possibility of inter- and intra-community tensions and conflicts in the creation of social capital. The conceptualisation of ‘community’ in these writings is very problematic and I shall return to it in the next section. It is sufficient to indicate here that there are several independent studies, a significant number of which are in fact sympathetic to the idea of social capital, which clearly suggest that ‘communities’ are often stratified and their cooperative spirit is both fragile and fluid (Mohanty 2003; Pai 1999). Third, donor studies generally tend to focus more on the relationship between social capital and community asset creation than on the question of democratisation (Uphoff and Wijayaratna 2000; Krishna and Uphoff 1999). This is somewhat surprising, for at the core of Putnam’s claim lies not asset creation but democracy. However, those who have scrutinised the relationship between social capital and democracy in developing countries suggest a more complex and at times even contradictory picture of their interrelationship (Pai 1999, 2001; Rudolph 2000; Blomkvist and Swain 2001). They challenge the romanticisation of the cooperative process within and between communities, as well as the underlying presumption that conflict *per se* is undesirable.<sup>23</sup> Fourth, however good the intentions of donor agencies may

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23. Commenting on the impact of social capital creation on dalit politics in Uttar Pradesh, Sudha Pai writes that: In positive terms social capital in the form of communal solidarity has united them, making them conscious of their special problems, bringing them together for joint social and political action.... However, in negative terms, such activities have divided them from other groups of their own dalit community.... (Pai 1999: 27, as cited in Rudolph 2000: 1764).



be, metaphorically (and ideologically) social capital sustains a 'victim-blaming' tendency (Schuurman 2001: 13). If social capital is historically a 'path-dependent' process (Putnam 1993; Fukuyama 1995), it would suggest that persisting poverty in developing countries is largely due to their own inability to create the 'right kind of social capital' rather than any external constraints.<sup>24</sup> And, finally, while many studies emphasise the inappropriateness of state involvement in creating social capital because they believe it can have 'serious negative impact' on the process, and acknowledge that social capital is generally a 'by-product' of religion, tradition and shared historical experience (Fukuyama 2001: 17-18), they rarely acknowledge that the introduction of market/commodity frameworks of living could generate insecurity and mistrust, which in turn could make communities vulnerable to conflicts (Scott 1999; Foley and Edwards 1999).<sup>25</sup> In other words, contrary to neoliberal belief, there is no necessary and/or inevitable link between the commodification (or neoliberalisation) of community life-orientation and the emergence of 'bourgeois virtues' like trust and honesty as claimed by writers like Fukuyama (1995, 2001). Thus, after a close review of 45 research papers on social capital, Foley and Edwards conclude that:

Both theoretical and methodological considerations, then, point to the difficulty of sustaining the sorts of claims that have been made about the relationships between social capital, conceived in fundamentally normative terms, and macro-economic, political, or social outcomes (Foley and Edwards 1999: 153).

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24. It is worth highlighting here the multilateral donor understanding of the 'causes' of poverty. Woolcock, for instance, argues that:

During the 1970s and 1980s, Cold War rhetoric and ideological dichotomies (state planning versus free markets) dominated development discourse in First and Second World countries, while elites in the Third World (and many of their western scholarly counterparts) tended to blame forces beyond their borders for poor domestic performance. For more than forty years, then, the role of national and local institutions—political, legal, and social—were largely neglected. A number of geo-political factors contributed to the turnaround in the 1990s, most prominent among them being the fall of communism, the ostensible difficulties of creating market institutions in transitional economies, the financial crises in Mexico, East Asia, Russia, and Brazil, and the enduring scourge of poverty in even the most prosperous economies (Woolcock 2001: 22).

One could contrast this viewpoint with that of the South Commission Report (1990) and that of the North-South debate in general.

25. Reviewing a number of empirical studies on social capital (Heying 1995; 1997; Anderson 1999), Foley and Edwards draw attention to the fact that changing corporate and market relations and their correlation with fluctuations in social capital:

[The] recent trend of mergers, acquisitions and globalisation and a resulting 'delocalisation' of the economy with causing the civic disengagement of elites. The 'social capital' residing on this social network, in other words, declined in direct relation to shifts in the global economy and the corresponding changes in corporate outlook and operating procedures (Foley and Edwards 1999: 159).



### 4.3. *The Invisible: Depoliticisation, New Communitarianism and Clientelism*

The ‘visible’ problems of social capital, though substantial, are only a part of the story. The more profound problems, I suggest, are in fact ‘invisible’ and can be classified into three broad categories: depoliticisation; modernisation of community; and the politics of clientelism. Among them, only the problematique of depoliticisation has been discussed somewhat extensively (Ferguson 1994, 2002; Harris 2001; Tornquist 1999; Mohan and Stokke 2000; Williams and Young 1994). While there are a few studies on the issue of modernisation of communities, many of its dimensions are yet to be examined, and the question of clientelism remains largely unexplored. However, in this section I shall confine myself to the issue of depoliticisation, leaving the other two issues for subsequent sections.

#### 4.3.1. Depoliticisation: The ‘Second Wave’ of Decentralisation and Participation

Those who sincerely want to help the poor, but who are unwilling to contemplate political challenge to existing structures of power.... end up on the wrong side.

— Harris (2001: 14)

It is best to mention at the very outset that the problem of ‘depoliticisation’ is not entirely limited to social capital. It is, in fact, at the heart of neoliberal belief that has broadly two dimensions: first, delegitimation and marginalisation of traditional political channels of power, specifically the state (whose power is guided by a constitutional frame of order); and second, redrawing the civil society architecture to suit the needs of expanding commodification of life. Creating social capital is a core strategy in the second context. Thus, in order to unfold the social capital–depoliticisation linkages, one has to encounter the ‘new’ civil society architecture evolved during the 1990s.

This ‘new’ architecture comprises of a number of intricate processes and new institutional formations, the most important being the creation of networks of groups/communities variously referred to as ‘user-groups’, ‘stakeholder groups’, ‘communities or community-based organisations’ (CBOs) and ‘beneficiary groups’, such as, for example, water user associations and village education committees etc.); self-help groups or micro-credit groups; and ‘autonomous organisations’ (a novel idea, especially in India), which are generally quasi-governmental (i.e., which have governmental patronage and power but are less constrained by rules and procedures) that stand between the state institutions and user groups. The NGOs continue to be part of this architecture, though with rapidly changing mandates and perhaps ambiguous futures (Kamat 2002; Fowler 2000a). In terms of processes, both ‘decentralisation’ and participatory development—or participation for development—have become central.



Although both decentralisation and participatory development became part of developmental policy well before the emergence of the new civil society architecture, their meaning and nature acquired a significantly different tone in at least two ways. First, in the previous context, decentralisation was always referred to in terms of the devolution of state power to local bodies such as Panchayats in India. The purpose of decentralisation was to make the planning processes (including developmental) relatively bottom-up and bring a sense of accountability to the governing process, particularly at the local level (Manor 1999; Jain 2000; UNDP 2001).<sup>26</sup> This was in tune with the well-established theorisations about 'participation' as a measure of making liberal democracy more democratic (Beetham 1991; Pateman 1971, 1985; Parekh 1993)—a step towards the realisation of 'we the people' dream.<sup>27</sup> In the current context, however, decentralisation occurs largely outside the political (i.e., Panchayat) realm, with 'stakeholderism' taking centre stage. The engagement of actors is not with the bottom-up developmental 'planning' process at the local political institution level; rather, it is with forging 'new associational forms' based on 'interest' in order to demand better management of resources and service delivery (Mohan and Stokke 2000).<sup>28</sup> This shift has an important implication for the idea of 'alternatives' in development theory and practice. While the previous bottom-up participatory (political) planning process, with its focus on 'local needs', held out the possibility of sustaining hope for a plurality of developmental solutions based on needs (Jain 2000), the 'new participation' model attempts to facilitate the 'locale' to adapt to the inevitable global (i.e., neoliberal) development paradigm—often referred to as 'there is no alternative' or TINA syndrome. I shall briefly return to this theme in the analysis of community and community-driven development in the following section. In the meanwhile, it would be useful to highlight the inherent nature of the new participation paradigm. A recent study captures the shift in the participation paradigm in terms of a 'new managerialism', which conceptualises development

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26. There are also other conceptualisations of decentralisation influenced by Gandhian philosophy and other similar thought processes. These versions tend to take a rather romantic/utopian view of the possibility of a local self-sustained community. See, generally, Jain (2000); Schumacher (1973); Gandhi (1908).

27. Contemporary democratic theory comprising critical currents from within liberalism as well as social democratic thought tends to argue that the future of democracy hinges upon expanding the substantive spaces of participation at the local level, generating significant theoretical as well as empirical interest in 'decentralisation' and participation. For a feel of the variety in theoretical engagement, see Habermas (1995); Pateman (1971; 1985); Mouffe (1996); Gutmann (2003); Unger (1998). For a feel of the empirical work, see Crook and Manor (1994; 1998); Manor (1999); Crook and Jerve (1991); Huntington (1991); Putnam (1993; 2000); Norris (2002); Jayal and Pai (2001); Jha and Mathur (1999).

28. Mohan and Stokke argue that:

Decentralisation in its neoliberal guise treats the local as a functional, economic space with policies designed to increase the efficiency of service delivery. In this sense the market is seen as a universal principle without any 'geography,' although the implication is that local political economies have their own coherence within this totalling logic. Decentralisation simply facilitates the efficiency of these nested local economies (Mohan and Stokke 2000: 251).



as mainly a technocratic process best achieved by professionalising policy-making (Desai and Imrie 1998). Put differently, 'technocrat knows best' lies at the heart of the new participation paradigm.

Secondly, participation in the pre-1990s paradigm meant participation in the political process of forming, and then in the functioning of the Panchayats. It meant both participation in a 'direct' sense—i.e., seeking a share in the political power vested in local institutions through participation in the electoral processes—as well as in an indirect sense—i.e., outside the structures of formal power by seeking accountability of those structures to the people at large.<sup>29</sup> However, in the current paradigm, participation by user/stakeholder groups amounts to little more than interest negotiation within the policy frameworks being formulated at higher levels.

Thus, while the new conceptualisations of 'participation' and 'decentralisation' in current, mainstream (neoliberal) development policy bear some resemblance to those used in democratic and development theory with which we are more familiar, they differ significantly in terms of their meaning and content. For instance, they no longer have any necessary or inevitable link with democratic processes. As many recent studies have in fact argued, such a reconceptualisation involves re-imagining people as consumers driven by utilitarian rational choice, rather than as responsible moral agents driven by citizenship values (Cornwall 2000; Mohan and Stokke 2000; Pieterse 2001). Thus, according to Stephen Biggs, the core problem with the concept of participation in the 'new development orthodoxy' is its 'emphasis on techniques as the missing ingredient for development rather than helping us to investigate the more difficult personal, agency and political issues of how methods and techniques are used selectively to gain personal, cultural and political ends' (Biggs 1995: 7, as cited in Cornwall 2000: 45).<sup>30</sup>

The story with regard to the issue of gender in development as represented by micro-credit/self-help group activity—another important programme engaged in creating social capital—is

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29. Here, the experience of the Mazdur Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) of Rajasthan, India, is instructive. MKSS spearheaded the 'Right to Information' campaigns, originally in Rajasthan and then in the rest of the country, due to which a number of state governments in India enacted legislations expressly recognising citizens' right to information. Commenting on the contribution of MKSS, Jenkins and Goetz observe that:

...one of the MKSS's most enduring achievements has been to demonstrate to other groups in India's vast and varied civil society—from development NGOs to social movements—the importance of access to information to their own fields of endeavour, whether they seek to improve government services delivery, end police abuses, ensure compliance with environmental and planning regulations, or enforce national protection for the rights of women, tribal communities, or children (Jenkins and Goetz 1999: 620; see also generally, Roy and Day 2001).

30. For an interesting and insightful analysis of how technocratic and/or professionalised approach to services contribute to disabling communities and citizens, see the following quote from McKnight:

Professionalized services communicate a worldview that defines our lives and our societies as a series of technical problems. This technical definition is masked by symbols of care and love that obscure the economic interests of the servicers and the disabling characteristics of their practices (McKnight 2000: 194).



not dissimilar. While there is a considerable body of literature which highlights the economic benefits that micro-credit could bring to women, particularly their role in helping them break certain oppressive customary barriers (Rankin 2001), a number of empirical studies also unequivocally point to the limits of such 'empowerment' (Deshmukh–Ranadive 2003),<sup>31</sup> as well as the likelihood of it reinforcing the oppressive structures within families.<sup>32</sup> Some studies suggest that the main reason for such an outcome is the philosophical value framework underpinning the micro-credit intervention, which has at least two core beliefs: first, that women are subordinated in families primarily due to lack of access to capital/investment; and, second, that the empowerment of women is best achieved not through the citizen-entitlement route (which would keep the question of equality of women at the centre and emphasise on women as public/political actors) but via transforming women into rational, economic actors who freely exercise their individual choices (Miller and Rose 1990). In other words, the philosophical basis of these interventions centres on a reformulated modernisation utopia.

What is intriguing about this shift is that despite considerable historical as well as empirical evidence regarding its inappropriateness, the new development orthodoxy continues to reinvent the wheel again and again. There is now enough evidence which clearly shows that modernisation utopias driven by utilitarian rational choice are both grossly simplistic as well as incorrect.<sup>33</sup> In this regard, the exhortations of the Human Development Centre (1999: 53) against the simplistic measures of economic restructuring are instructive:

In stratified societies with unequal distributions of land, wealth, income and access to human capital, devolving power from the centre may only pass it on to powerful local elites who are even less responsive to the needs of their people. Without fundamental land reforms and universal education, local governments become an instrument of oppression in the hands of influential elites.

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31. Reviewing the District Poverty Initiatives Programme in Andhra Pradesh, Deshmukh–Ranadive comments on the relative 'success' of the programme in enhancing 'public spaces' for women, but goes on to caution that:

...when economic and public political spaces of women increase, it often leads to increase in work burdens and increase in domestic violence, since existing hierarchies within the household are threatened due to changes in the role of women in the public sphere (Deshmukh–Ranadive 2003: 1677).

32. Analysing the micro-credit experiences of women in Nepal, Rankin observes that:

The subjectivity of rational economic woman when imposed through micro-credit programmes not only proves elusive within South Asian cultures, but also can exacerbate, not challenge, existing social hierarchies (Rankin 2001: 32).

33. One can cite many illustrations of such cyclical imaginations of utilitarian modernisation. For instance, consider the impact caused by the 'modernisation' of legal systems in nineteenth-century colonies by European coloniser countries (Stokes 1959). Such modernisation processes were fraught with ignorance and irrationality on the part of the colonial state (Nair 1996). Mumtaz (1996) demonstrates with sufficient clarity how the mechanical modernising interventions of the colonial administration in Africa often led not to democratisation (independent of the 'intention' of the interventions) but to its opposite, 'local despotism'.



Our discussion so far sufficiently demonstrates one simple point: that the concepts of decentralisation and participation carry a very different meaning and purpose in current mainstream developmental theory/policy as compared to their earlier usages, wherein they were always associated with catalysing radical, democratic transformation. Their current usage is rooted in a perspective of the human being as a rational, economic person and thus emphasises the creation of a 'civil society' that would accommodate individuals as consumers rather than as entitled citizens. Such a shift, I suggest, is not coincidental. Rather, it appears to be a deliberately evolved policy move to substantially de-emphasise the citizen-entitlement route of empowerment and replace it with a vision of 'new communitarianism.' It is therefore important that scholars and policy think-tanks of developmental studies do not employ these terms as if their meaning were self-evident.

### 4.3.2. CSB Strategy 2: 'New Communitarianism'

The second important strategy of CSB in the 1990s was what could be referred to as 'new communitarianism.' Like decentralisation and participation, the concept of community is extensively used in policy literature (World Bank 2000, 2001, 2003), but its meaning and nature appear to be very different from those of its past invocations (Rubin 1961; Hoben 1982). The earlier use of 'community' by social scientists such as developmental anthropologists was in the context of viewing development as a 'cultural experience' (Ferguson 1994, 2002). It emerged as a reaction to the over-centralising developmental state, whose model of development (based on some variety of 'modernisation' paradigm) was not sensitive enough to the cultural plurality at the 'local' level and the need to evolve 'alternative' modernity paradigms based on 'local needs' (Schneider 1975; Hoben 1982). It is thus part of a larger critique of reductionist developmental rationalism (wherein 'development' was viewed as modernisation based on a particular form of rationalisation, i.e., nationalism) and its blindness to the place of 'culture' in the developmental imaginings of local 'communities' or the politics of 'identity formation'. Even more radical than developmental anthropology is the Gandhian view of self-sustained village communities based on absolute human needs with a focus on survival rather than capital accumulation (Gandhi 1908).<sup>34</sup>

The contemporary invocation of 'community' in mainstream (neoliberal) development literature, on the other hand, has very little to do with the earlier understanding of it. Indeed, at the heart of this view of 'community' lies a new variety of modernisation utopia, which claims to remedy

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34. A useful reference could be made here to a set of important writings of the 1970s that were influenced by Gandhism, Buddhism and several variants of ecological philosophies. An illustrative view can be found in Schumacher's influential work, *Small is Beautiful* (1973).



the 'cultural blindness' of its earlier (nationalist or neoclassical) incarnation. And in so doing, 'community' is visualised as a primarily rational, economic identity, giving the cultural aspect merely peripheral importance. Fukuyama captures this with his quintessential brevity:

Over the past generation, economic thought has been dominated by neoclassical or free market economists, associated with names like Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, and George Stigler. The rise of the neoclassical perspective constitutes a vast improvement from earlier decades in this century, when Marxists and Keynesians held sway. We can think of neoclassical economics as being, say, eighty percent correct: *it has uncovered important truths about the nature of money and markets because its fundamental model of rational, self-interested human behavior is correct about eighty percent of the time*. But there is a *missing twenty percent of human behavior about which neoclassical economics can give only a poor account*. As Adam Smith well understood, economic life is deeply embedded in social life, and it cannot be understood apart from the customs, morals and habits of the society in which it occurs. *In short it cannot be divorced from culture* (Fukuyama 1996: 13, emphasis added).

In other words, in this perspective 'community' is not regarded as primarily a cultural identity. Questions such as *what kind* of development and *whose* development, or whether a culturally sensitive approach to development demands the exploration of genuine 'alternatives' to development models dominated by hi-tech, have no relevance in this view. Development has no context (i.e., cultural) specificity; it is merely 'designed,' obviously by professional specialists (Narayan 1995), in such a way that the community must 'own' that development and also 'drive' that development (World Bank 2001). Thus in its 'community based development' designs, the Bank presumes a perfectly rational, economic community and provides self-evident managerial advice for its 'success'. Consider the following quote:

If a community group is to function successfully, several criteria must be met: the group must address a felt need and a common interest; the benefits to the individuals of participating in the group must outweigh the costs; the group should be embedded in the existing social organization; it must have the capacity, leadership, knowledge and skills to manage the task; and it must own and enforce its own rules and regulations. Steps need to be taken, therefore, whether strengthening or modifying existing organizations or establishing new ones, to ensure that these conditions are in place (Narayan 1995).

Neoliberal communitarianism clearly has no clue about how to negotiate the 'cultural question' under the overarching umbrella of rational, economic community. Its conceptualisations of 'community' hence remain rhetorical, even naïve, and view the poor as an undifferentiated



category, making no attempt to understand mediating variables such as caste, race and gender.<sup>35</sup> It is argued that CDD gives control of decisions and resources to community groups, which often work in partnership with demand-responsive support organisations and service providers, including elected local governments, the private sector, NGOs and central government agencies. As such, CDD is seen as a way of providing social and infrastructure services, organising economic activity and resource management, empowering poor people, improving governance, and enhancing the security of the poorest (World Bank 2001: 303–304). It is sufficient to highlight here the ease with which a complex set of unrelated (or at least in a relationship that is *not* self-evident) vocabularies are woven together in this perspective. More importantly, none of them take into account any characteristics of local ‘culture’; rather, they aim at reorienting local ‘cultures’. To put it crudely, they help the local ‘communities’ to adapt to the ‘realities’ of the ‘culture of commodification’.

This understanding of ‘community’ becomes clearer when considered in the light of some ground-level reflection. For instance, commenting on the undifferentiated, naive understanding of community in the DPEP projects in India, Krishna Kumar argues that the meaning of ‘community’ in DPEP literature is often confined only to those sections of the poor who are not in a position to afford rural private schools, and does not take into account that even within the poor there exist tensions based on caste identities (Kumar *et al.* 2001). Similarly, empirical studies have shown that while the ‘associational forms’ that define new communitarianism may be useful in principle, in reality they might end up producing contradictory outcomes.

Village education committees and power to the panchayats are indeed welcome changes. However, such actions lose their significance in a hierarchical rural society unless the political organizations of the powerless are strong enough to counter the attacks on dalit panchs, sarpanchs, ward members and dalit women...

... Given the fractured state of our social polity on the lines of class, caste, religion, region, gender and ethnicity, presided over by an overtly bureaucratic state, ‘community participation’ can very easily acquire dangerous and retrogressive forms (Saxena 2003: 97).

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35. A recent OED study on community-driven development, for instance, points out that the definition of ‘community’ in the Bank’s projects has at least three characteristics:

First, the community is generally understood to mean a group of people who share broad development goals. Second, in the community, social behavior and relationships are governed by social norms that are expected to provide solidarity. Third, by extension, those who do not belong that community are ‘excluded’ (World Bank–OED 2003).

The study further indicates that in the Bank’s approach, community is ‘too often interpreted as a “unified, organic whole”’ (*ibid.*: 5).



The neoliberal reference to 'culture' is thus reductionist and, from a more sharply critical position, insincere. It does not aim at providing a genuine remedy for the gross neglect shown to the question of culture by the modernisation paradigm of the post-War period. Rather, it brings in, as I have tried to show, a new modernisation paradigm in the guise of 'cultural sensitivity'.<sup>36</sup> In this context, drawing upon history might prove to be instructive. Consider the following experience with the political modernisation project of post-colonial societies. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, American foreign policy think-tanks such as Huntington wrote in the late 1950s about the centrality of exporting liberal democratic institutions to post-colonial countries in order to gradually transform them into liberal societies (Huntington 1965, 1968), only to find the local 'traditional' power structures (such as caste in India) quickly adapting themselves to the new rules of the 'liberal' institutional games (Kothari 1970; Shah 1975). The complexity of the interaction between the so-called traditional and the modern in post-colonial countries continues to baffle scholars. But despite such experiences, nearly four decades later the neoliberals seem to have once again re-invented the wheel of modernisation (this time centred on not 'political' but economic development), with the emphasis on rational, economic *community* as its driving force.

Viewed from this angle, the claim of writers such as Woolcock that the current phase of communitarianism is an antidote for the 1950s–1970s modernisation paradigm and an improvement over the 'traditional' perspective of communitarianism, is largely misplaced,<sup>37</sup> for the new communitarianism is simply an incarnation of the modernisation paradigm in a different form.

However, I want to suggest a further element of paradox in the new modernisation paradigm. While the earlier paradigm hinged upon the presumption of a democratic order based on citizen values (even when they were incorrectly understood in 'universalist' terms and had very little to do with socio-cultural contexts), the new communitarian paradigm has great potential to reinvent clientelism and its accompanying patronage politics, which are undemocratic in nature. Put more simply, it could proclaim the end of a framework of politics based on citizen-sovereignty and usher in community-based clientelism.

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36. For some interesting reflections on the neoclassical/neoliberal view on culture and its role in the (new) modernisation processes, see Harrison and Huntington (2000).

37. Woolcock (2002: 34–35) cites a 1951 UN document (from Escobar 1995) to criticise the insensitivity of modernisation paradigm to the issue of culture. The document perceived all kinds of 'tradition' as an obstacle to development. It proclaimed that in order for development to take root 'ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst'. Woolcock concludes that, 'For the major development theories, then, social relations have been construed as singularly burdensome, exploitative, liberating, or irrelevant'.



## 5. Understanding the Potential Implications: Towards a 'New Clientelism'

When the average citizen is poor, catering to special interests at the cost of the general interest is clientelism.

— WDR 2004 (World Bank 2003a: 80).

The WDR 2004 alludes to two variant visions of development—one based on 'citizenship' and the other based on 'clientelism'—and claims, albeit equivocally, that the model of development advocated by the Bank facilitates the former (World Bank 2003a). It is heartening to see the Bank claiming that its interventions aim to foster a development that will sustain and strengthen citizenship values. But the overall policy framework, within which the Bank functions, does not substantiate this claim, at least in any forceful way. In fact, I suggest that the neoliberal vision of development (which roughly represents the Bank's policy framework), guided by social capital and new communitarianism, has a normative preference for creating newer forms of clientelism rather than fostering citizenship value frameworks. I propose that there are at least three vantage points from which this issue can be analysed: first, the conceptualisation of social capital; second, the conceptualisation of community; and finally, the nature and scope of 'citizen' participation in the neoliberal development paradigm. An assessment of the development interventions at ground level would help to further illuminate the issue.

Social capital is often referred to in Putnam's (somewhat neutral) sense of trust and networking of groups, but what is often missing in these descriptions is any reference to the *nature* and *kind* of social capital. However, the recent writings of Woolcock (1998, 2001, 2002) serve to throw some light on the matter of what actually constitutes the nature of social capital. Consider the following quote:

'It's not what you know, it's *who* you know.' This common aphorism sums up much of the conventional wisdom regarding social capital. It is wisdom born of our experience that *gaining membership to exclusive clubs requires inside contacts, that close competitions for jobs and contracts are usually won by those with 'friends in high places'*. When we fall upon hard times we know it is our friends and family who constitute the final 'safety net'. Conscientious parents devote hours of time to the school board and to helping their kids with homework, only too aware *that a child's intelligence and motivation alone are not enough to ensure a bright future*. Less instrumentally, some of our happiest and most rewarding hours are spent talking with neighbors, sharing meals with friends, participating in religious gatherings, and volunteering on community projects. (Woolcock 2002: 23, emphasis added).

Woolcock then proceeds to suggest that 'intuitively' social capital is an 'asset' that a person can call upon in a crisis, and which could be 'leveraged for material gain' (*ibid.*: 23).



Following Woolcock, Fournier elaborates on the different kinds of social capital:

Social capital exists in relations between and among actors, and is based on mutual trust. *Fixed* social capital exists in relations of trust *necessary for common survival*, while *movable* social capital is found in relations of trust between individuals who are *pursuing personal goals* (Fournier 2002: 9, emphasis added).

Any reasonable inference from these two statements should at the minimum indicate the following: It is time that we recognised that hard work to gain knowledge is not a gateway to 'success', for the nature of achievement depends not on the knowledge one possesses but on building the 'right' relationships with the 'right' people at the right moment of time. Put differently, what Woolcock is trying to say is that we need to overcome the illusion that modern societies are based on the principle of non-discrimination and the rule of law. Rather than complaining (cynically) about non-implementation of principles (i.e., engaging with a normative critique of the interventions), it would be more fruitful to take the route of pragmatic expediency.<sup>38</sup> Naturally, 'speaking truth to power' does not pay; what will pay is developing a 'positive attitude' to see 'truth' in what the power speaks.

If this inference appears to be a bit far-fetched, we might want to turn to the idea of community. A recent OED study of CDD indicates that the current, renewed emphasis on community participation in the Bank's projects occurred in the context of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. In an attempt to find some reason for this renewed emphasis, OED draws on two important studies by Arnstein (1969) and Chogull and Guaraldo (1996) to subtly suggest that while citizen participation works for the developed world, community participation is more appropriate for the developing world:

Arnstein (1969) defines citizen participation as 'the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future'. However, Chogull (1996) argues that the Arnstein ladder needs to be modified when applied to underdeveloped countries, because the constraints are much greater. The expectations in the developing

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38. It is interesting to see how such justifications acquire ever-sophisticated vocabularies in claiming adaptation to pragmatic expedience as being 'positive' (hence desirable) and adherence to normative critique as being 'pessimistic' (and conversely undesirable, even if it is being 'right'). For example, in his analysis of productivity and attitudes towards work, Landes claims that:

The people who live to work are a small and fortunate elite. But it is an elite open to newcomers, self-selected, the kind of people who accentuate the positive. In this world, the optimists have it, not because they are always right, but because they are positive [read expediently pragmatic]. Even when wrong, they are positive, and that is the way of achievement, correction, improvement, and success. Educated, eyes-open optimism pays; pessimism can only offer the empty consolation of being right (Landes 2000: 13).



world are not only for a voice in decision making but also for access to a minimum level of basic services to which communities may be willing to contribute (World Bank–OED 2003: 4).

While the idea of citizen participation in the developed world is characterised by the processes of ‘partnership,’ ‘delegated power’ and ‘citizen control’, community participation in developing countries is characterised by the processes of ‘conciliation,’ ‘partnership,’ and ‘empowerment’ (*ibid.*: 4). It can be seen that here, too, the emphasis on community participation in developing countries has very little to do with democratic empowerment, i.e., an empowerment that strengthens the citizen entitlement process.

This argument can be further substantiated in the light of the analysis presented in WDR 2004. Focusing on making services work for the poor, WDR 2004 identifies two broad routes of bringing accountability in the basic services provided to the poor—a ‘long route’ and a ‘short route’. The ‘long route’ is the ‘citizen-policymaker-service provider’ route, while the short route is ‘client-service provider’ route. While agreeing in principle that both approaches could ensure effective delivery of services to the poor, the report tends to prefer the latter, particularly in developing countries wherein the former approach often degenerates into a ‘clientelist’ regime. There would be very little disagreement with the Bank’s analysis vis-à-vis the failure of the ‘long route’ to deliver services in developing countries. A moot question, however, would still be whether the answer lies in adopting the ‘short route’ or in reformulating the ‘long route’. The Bank itself prefers the short route, which implies the gradual privatisation and commodification of services. Since the expansion of ‘participation’ and ‘choice’ takes place within this commodification process, ‘participation’ actually transforms the ‘poor citizen’ into a proud client (World Bank 2003a: 9).

There is one basic question, among many others, which needs to be addressed, i.e., whether the ‘short route’ is free of the vulnerabilities of the ‘long route’ as the WDR 2004 claims. If communities are perceived as highly stratified entities with complex, competing forces within and between them, then, rather than eliminating ‘clientelism’, this method of social capital creation would very likely have its own variant of it.<sup>39</sup> A number of case studies pertaining to the interventions made by the World Bank in India, such as in the education and irrigation sectors, clearly suggest a growing trend of a new patronage process being facilitated by the

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39. According to the Bank, ‘clientelism’ or ‘clientelist political environments are those in which ... politicians have strong incentives to shift public spending to cater to special interests, to core supporters, or to “swing” voters’ (World Bank–OED 2003: 80). It further adds: ‘Clientelism is characterised by an excessive tendency for political patrons to provide private rewards to clients’ (*ibid.*: 84).



development interventions.<sup>40</sup> In fact, the new administrative and policy architecture has simultaneously loosened the nominal accountability requirements that the bureaucracy had to follow and also made them less accountable to the poor.

The case of Andhra Pradesh in India stands as a useful illustration. Over the last 10 years the state of Andhra Pradesh has emerged as 'model' state of development, with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu embarking upon an ambitious programme and 'vision' to achieve this goal.<sup>41</sup> The vision captures the essence of the development model advocated by the Bank and Mr Naidu is credited with having successfully achieved many of its quantitative indicators.<sup>42</sup> It would be useful, therefore, to look at the kind of impact or direction of change that these interventions suggest. Mr Naidu places emphasis on efficient and transparent governance as part of his commitment to 'good governance'. This has resulted in the creation of e-governance structures that facilitate free and quick access to certain kinds of data (such as tender notices, government orders, etc.) on the state government's website.

Compared to the past, this undoubtedly represents an improvement in certain aspects of governance. But does it also indicate a strengthening of people's democratic empowerment? While available empirical evidence may not help us make any conclusive statement about it, it certainly points towards certain emerging trends. Recent empirical studies have highlighted at least two important developments. First, that the party in power (the Telugu Desam headed by Mr Naidu) is increasingly gaining control over the new civil society institutions (such as SHGs) and programmes like Janmabhoomi, which the party uses as measures for creating new forms of political patronage.<sup>43</sup> Simultaneously, the new civil society institutions are being utilised to

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40. For a more conceptual critique, see Pai 2001; Rudolph 2000; Blomkvist and Swain 2001. For more specific analysis of the politics of aid interventions and how the new populist politics is being adapted to the new conditions to derive benefit by it in terms of creating new patronage structures see, Ravinder 1999; Rudolph and Rudolph 2001; Ayyangar 2003; Harshe and Srinivas 1999; Reddy 2002; Powis 2003.

41. Chandrababu Naidu's 'Swarna Andhra' Vision 2020 (the vision of golden Andhra 2020) is a plan to take the state of Andhra Pradesh to the highway of development. While the document outlining this vision drew both instant praise and criticism, it remains a widely contested proposal. See Reddy (2000) for a critique of the proposal.

42. For example, by 2002 Andhra Pradesh had 1,15,000 Self-Help Groups (SGHs), more than half of the total number in the country. Similarly, studies indicate that there were 37,885 youth employment groups, 6,616 joint forest management groups, 10,292 water users associations, 36,346 mothers' committees, 99,618 village education committees, and 5,499 watershed committees (Powis 2003).

43. In a recent study on decentralisation in Andhra Pradesh, Powis (2003) provides the following observation:

The Telugu Desam Government in Andhra, under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu is developing SHAs within the context of significant structural development of the party. It is claimed that TDP committees exist in all habitations in the state – from polling booth level committees at the sub-village level to the state level. In 2002 the party claimed to have over 12 lakh active members and, if the party positions were all filled, there would be nearly 8 lakh party committee position-holders at various levels. This implies that 63 per cent of active TDP cadre can get 'political employment' by holding positions in booth, village, mandal, district committees or on the various sub-committees.



subvert the gains made by historically disempowered groups in the traditional democratic (Panchayat) institutions.<sup>44</sup> While this might not be a uniformly shared view,<sup>45</sup> there is enough evidence to suggest that the democratising potential of the new civil society interventions in Andhra Pradesh is, at best, mixed, and has already become vulnerable to patronage politics. Whether the party eventually succeeds in its mission or not, there is clear indication that it is trying hard to create a new clientelist politics.<sup>46</sup>

## 6. Some Tentative Concluding Observations

This paper is an attempt at critically engaging with the changing currents of mainstream developmentalism, with a close focus on the idea of civil society building. One of the implicit assumptions of the scrutiny is that the claims of poverty reduction and empowerment are likely to acquire a democratic character only if they take into cognisance questions of sharpening inequalities and political and economic disempowerment at every level of their conceptualisation. Such an assumption is imperative in the present context, when everyone swears by development

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44. Powis (2003) further points out:

Committees of various forms have opened up space for the local party leaders to offer symbolic, if not financial incentives to party cadre. Key positions like water-user association chairman or village party president have offered opportunities to relocate important village leaders who cannot contest for sarpanch due to caste-based reservation in the panchayats. Well-connected leaders can utilise these positions to capture funds by utilising the influence of the local MLA. This can, in certain circumstances, facilitate the effective capture of gram panchayat's functions and powers. In one particular village I found the upper caste TDP village president had access to funds through a variety of channels (food-for-work, tank development and Janmabhoomi). The elected scheduled caste Congress sarpanch had no knowledge of, or access to, such funds.

45. For a more cautiously weighed argument see Mooij (2002). While agreeing that the SHGs are perhaps part of the Telugu Desam Party's strategy to galvanise its support base (2002: 41), Mooij suggests that there are nevertheless likely to be interesting spin-offs that could have an 'empowering' impact, particularly for women (*ibid.*: 46-48). Although her argument that the SHGs are catalysing the transformation of 'citizens as stakeholders' might have pragmatic appeal, her analysis is largely silent on the question of the disempowering implications of stakeholdersim (in terms of growing 'clientelism' in the process) to a broader conceptualisation of citizenship. For a different view on SHGs and the limits of empowerment, see Deshmukh-Ranadive (2003).

46. There is yet another dimension of clientelism that is not generally discussed by the scholarship on civil society building. The rhetoric of efficient and transparent governance in 1990s advocated new administrative structures—with a view to avoid bureaucratic bottlenecks—that would function as 'autonomous organisations'. But they eventually became quasi-government bodies (popularly referred to as 'government owned non-governmental organisations' (GO-NGOs)) with full governmental power (for the patron is either the Chief Minister himself or the minister concerned and at each district level is handled by the District Collector or a special officer who is generally an administrative services officer on deputation) with very little accountability to any procedure. While there is no conclusive proof or close analysis of GO-NGOs in India, media reports indicate that corruption is actually on the increase in these organisations.



and poverty reduction as though these terms carry a universal meaning—eschewing ideology ‘development’ has acquired a ‘neutral’ character. Writing about the idea of the state a decade ago, Ashis Nandy (1993) wondered why, when we speak about the ‘state’, so many of us think only in terms of a ‘nation–state’, as if there were no other forms of political organisation upon which we could draw. Somewhat along similar lines, one is struck by the fact that a particular ideological conceptualisation of ‘development’ (viz., neoliberal development) is taken to mean ‘development’ as if no other conceptualisations of development exist or are possible.

Viewed from this vantage point, the democratic challenge of empowerment cannot be addressed adequately by statistics of ‘tangible results’ in poverty reduction. This is not to belittle the crucial value of reducing poverty levels, but to suggest that a ‘tangible’ indicator of poverty reduction—whether at the macro or micro level—is in itself not sufficient for construing that it is either empowering or democratising. There is no doubt that a fall in poverty levels would result in spin-off benefits for the disempowered; it might help them to gain self-confidence and even assert themselves in certain contexts. But numerous studies indicate that there is no direct cause—effect relationship between the two, and that even when empowerment takes place it is unable to cross certain barriers. Poverty reduction levels alone, therefore, cannot signify the potential of democratic empowerment in the CSB process. The question of democratic empowerment, therefore, must be addressed in the larger context of development theory and the conceptualisations of civil society and citizenship.

The problematique of democratic empowerment in the context of developmentalism is thus twofold. Firstly, it relates to the growing ‘impoverishment’ of development theory and, conversely, of policy-making. This does not mean that there is a dearth of theorisation; rather, the source of ‘impoverishment’ seems to be a product of the two-pronged strategy of mainstream developmentalism: reductionism and the redefinition and appropriation of erstwhile democratic ideas into the neoliberal fold. I have tried to suggest that this two-pronged strategy has contributed, one, to a significant marginalisation of alternative conceptualisations of CSB and empowerment, and two, to a redefinition of the ideas of citizenship and civil society in such way that they actually become facilitators of newer forms of clientelism. The emphasis on ‘collaboration’ between the state, the market and civil society, as opposed to the erstwhile theorisations of the three categories being inherently ‘contestatory’, is in fact an indication of growing support for clientelist thinking in CSB processes.

The second problematique of democratic empowerment goes beyond development theory: it is related to the growing tension between the democratic theories that emerged in the last two centuries and the resultant codification of numerous norms and codes on the one hand (Nussbaum 2000; Genugten and Perez-Bustillo 2001), and the ‘needs’ of ‘efficient’ functioning of markets on the other. The core tension is between the normative standards that keep the



human person at the centre, wherein social and economic policies aim to fulfil the 'entitlements' of the individual, and the newly evolved post-War economic institutions and their theoretical orientations, which emphasise the principles of market necessity and market efficiency.<sup>47</sup>

A fundamental requirement for those who are concerned with catalysing democratic empowerment through development is, therefore, to engage with the issues of genuine cultural sensitivity and real 'alternatives' in developmental thought and policy, resisting the reductionist mainstreaming of the language of resistance. In other words, it is highly necessary to provide critical and intellectual challenges to the growing developmental totalitarianism. This, I suggest, is the real challenge of democratic empowerment.

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47. Although there is a dearth of serious writing on this issue, of late some incisive contributions have been made. Particularly Baxi (2002) and Garcia (1999) deal with the issue of market necessity driven by variations of 'consequentialism' and the human rights norms guided by 'deontology'.



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# Glossary

## Citizenship

The modern idea of 'citizenship' is closely related to the concepts of democracy and civil society. It is based on two core presumptions: first, all individuals (belonging to a nation) are equal, and second, in the ultimate analysis provide legitimacy to the existence of the state through their free consent. However, during the 18th and 19th centuries the abstract notions of 'equality' and 'free consent' were largely blind to deep-rooted social inequalities and unfreedoms. As a result, there were, and continue to be, various social movements seeking to remedy such blindness by highlighting the concrete processes of exclusions based on such categories as 'gender', 'race', 'caste', 'nation', 'religion' or any 'cultural identity'. These movements broadened our understanding of 'citizenship' in the 20th century. In all modern democratic societies 'citizenship rights' are enshrined in the constitutions and aim to enhance possibilities of 'self-determination' (consent) and equality. Citizenship therefore is a measure to 'empower' individuals politically vis-à-vis any measures of state (or any powerful institution).

## Citizenship and Globalisation

The recent process of globalisation, particularly its economic variant, brought in new challenges to the idea of citizenship. The nature of challenges seems to be two fold. First, economic globalisation challenges the ability of nation-states in 'regulating' global economic actors-the Inter-Governmental Economic Institutions (World Bank; IMF; WTO and various regional financial/economic institutions) and the global corporations. The second challenge, which flows from the first, is to the relevance of constitutionalism and constitutional orders, because the goals of a 'nation' cannot any longer be achieved in isolation from 'globalisation' and hence should be revised accordingly. Both these challenges question the earlier assumptions that politics can guide and regulate socio-economic processes and individual consent ('self-determination') is the basis of political constitutional orders. One response to such challenges seems to be re-conceptualising citizenship in market-friendly terms-'citizens as stakeholders'; the other is the recent initiatives in conceptualising a 'global civil society' as the basis of imagining a new framework for citizen powers and responsibilities.

## Civil Society

Civil Society was viewed as a 'space' outside the realm of state and family. More recently it is viewed as a 'space' outside the realms of state, family and also market. There is however no unanimity on the 'role' of civil society. Classical liberal democratic thought believed that civil



society formation was a necessary pre-condition for the emergence and functioning of a democratic society, while certain critical (Marxist) currents of thought viewed it as space that helps sustain the ruling elite hegemony, which would save them from using direct coercion. The predominant reference in the development literature is more close to the first sense and suggests that democratic transformation pre-supposes civil society formation. However, of late there is more doubt about such presumption, for in many developing societies civil society formations seem to be helping commodification of life (which has built-in exclusionary measures, say money power) rather than democratisation.

### Civil Society Building

The term 'civil society building' (CSB), which came into vogue in the development aid policy literature, is based on two presumptions: that in many non-Western (developing) countries lack of democratic fabric is due largely to the absence of a proper civil society; and, with carefully planned and well-meaning interventions it is possible to facilitate the 'building' of such a civil society. The aim of development aid is thus not merely poverty reduction. The development interventions are expected to facilitate, via poverty reduction, the 'building' of civil society, which in tangible measure should mean enhancing citizenship opportunities. The measure of 'success' in CSB process therefore is not only poverty reduction but equally, if not more importantly, enhancement of citizenship opportunities.

### Clientelism

Clientelism refers to a particular kind of power relationship that binds 'clients' and 'patrons'-patrons provide opportunities and resources to their clients, which in turn would have a reciprocation process from client to the patron. Although clientelism is perhaps not uncommon even in the western societies, it acquires a greater significance in non-western societies for a variety of reasons. Firstly, it reinforces the 'traditional' power relations in society that erode legitimacy of the political frameworks based on rule of law and constitutionalism. Secondly, such clientelism in many developing countries would result in skewed and unfair distribution of public goods to political loyalists. Thirdly, it would encourage corruption and arbitrary exercise of authority in public offices. However, there are some scholars and politicians who believe that 'Asian societies' are more suited for patronage politics than rule of law politics.

### Community/Communitarianism/ Community Driven Development

The concept of community is generally presented as a contrast to the concept of individual. It is believed that while the modern (western) societies emphasise on individual choices the non-



modern societies emphasise on community survival. Many critiques of rabid materialism in the western development thought (eg. Gandhi) or those who criticised the selfish nature of the capitalist individual and the institution of private property (eg. Marx) tended to embrace 'community' as an alternative to modern capitalism, though in radically different ways. For Gandhi the alternative was a need-based, low-technology driven self-sustaining village community living, whereas for Marx 'communism' was a measure to overcome the constraints imposed by a capitalist economy through its individual private property and commodity fetishism. However, more recent invocations of community in development policy thought (eg. World Bank) are not related to either of the variants mentioned. Instead, the 'new' invocations suggest community as a 'cultural' entity, largely to be found only in the developing world, and it is premised on the principles of cooperation and coexistence. Communities are further viewed as important vehicles of modern 'development', ie., potentially adapting to the market-driven commodification processes. In this sense, community is no longer a source of critiquing modern (neoliberal) development; in fact, as the World Bank suggests, it 'drives' the neoliberal development.

### Consequentialism

Consequentialism is a particular way of arriving at moral justifications. The underlying logic places emphasis on the intended consequence of a proposed act in order to understand whether the proposed act is justifiable. Utilitarianism stands as a useful example. It believes that the ultimate objective of any society is to strive for the achievement of greatest happiness of the greater number. In the pursuit of achieving such a goal ('end')-the 'public good'-if a relatively 'small proportion of people' have to face hardships then such a measure, utilitarianism would suggest, is justifiable. The discourse of 'cost-benefit' analysis in most of the development projects could be seen as an illustration of this point. Similarly, state agencies often justify gross human rights violations such as practice of torture in the name of tackling 'terrorism'. Similarly, the economic policies in the context of globalisation must be guided by what is understood to be essential for the trade ('trade necessity'), even if it is at the expense of certain established standards (say labour rights). In more simple terms, it is often referred to as 'ends and means' problem, wherein the basic question is whether means that tend to negatively affect certain sections of people could be justified in the name of the intended ('good') outcome in the future. Consequentialism is however not confined to one particular ideology or creed-it is equally embraced by shades of right and left.

### Decentralisation

Decentralisation evolved as a counter-thesis to centralisation in economics and politics. While economic decentralisation emphasized on the 'local' and smallness in the process of



industrialisation, political decentralisation was about devolution of state power to local levels (eg. Panchayats in India), wherein the assumption was to facilitate direct participation by people in the day-to-day matters of political decision making. In the latter (political) sense decentralisation is thus also related to 'participation'. The neo-liberal understanding of decentralisation is however different and emphasises creating local level 'associations' outside the realm of state power with hope that they would perform role of 'pressure groups' as they did in the West, in seeking 'accountable governance'. The Indian experience suggests the contrary: that these pressure groups actually become part of new patronage politics.

### Democracy

Democracy could be viewed as a form of political organisation and also as a value framework. The dominant perception is to view democracy in terms of certain indicators of 'liberal democracy'-a constitutional framework that recognises freedom and equality in public life, guarantees certain fundamental human rights, periodic elections and institutional checks and balances. However, viewed as a 'value framework' (as opposed to a set of institutions to govern) democracy helps us conceptualise/understand subtle processes of inequality, discrimination, exclusionary practices, which in turn could be a basis for seeking more democracy from the state institutions, markets and social institutions of power (such as caste in India). Democracy in the latter sense, though suggests a 'universal' form, acquires a context-specific character with its focus on identifying and refining our understanding on disempowering processes and prodding us to seek remedies.

### Deontology

Deontology stands as an opposite current to consequentialism in arriving at moral judgements. The 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of a particular act is not determined by the 'goodness' or 'badness' of its consequence (ie. intended effect). For example, 'human rights' cannot draw the justification of their existence as they are likely to bring 'goodness'; rather human rights exist because they derive their justification from 'human dignity', a quality inherent to all human beings.

### Development

The idea 'development' is variously understood as 'economic growth', or 'progress' (scientific and material) etc. In the beginning of 1990s the concept of 'human development' acquired prominence, which questioned the growth models of development, and argued for more appropriate indicators of human well-being and human capabilities.



### Empowerment

Empowerment is a somewhat ambiguous idea and is multi-dimensional in character. In a simplified sense it is based on the assumption that the complex modernising processes around us continuously change the rules of survival and in doing so they make, both by default or as an unintended consequence, many sections of people 'disempowered'. Empowerment is thus a strategic intervention that intends to remedy such disempowerment. However, all empowerment interventions need to necessarily foster 'democratic empowerment'. For example, the misconceptions/inadequacies of metropolitan feminisms in understanding 'gender empowerment' in the context of rural women in developing countries did not result in democratic empowerment; rather it sustained the hegemonic space of metropolitan feminism in theorising gender. Only much later feminists and women's activists from the developing countries questioned such theorisations. 'Democratic empowerment' thus is not merely improvements in access to material goods in life, but is a process that keeps empowerment interventions embedded in the value framework of democracy.

### Globalisation

Globalisation is a generic term that is employed to indicate various processes in the realms of economy, politics and culture that are contributing to making us feel a 'small planet' but at the same time challenging/destabilising many existing frameworks of survival. As with any other process, globalisation offers both threats and opportunities-it has contributed to the emergence of new civil society networks, greater integration, new technological skills, but at the same time also contributed to the emergence of newer monopolies, increased uncertainty and risk in life, new information and technological inequalities. Whether globalisation could contribute to 'democratic empowerment' depends to an extent on how the issues of growing monopolies and the increasing uncertainty and risk are addressed.

### Neoliberalism

The term 'neoliberalism' came to denote a combination of neo-classical economic thought, and libertarianism modified and adapted to the changing times of globalisation. The core presumptions of neoliberalism include not only the conventional libertarian framework of an ultra-minimal state in the economic activity, but also imagining a special role for the developed states in actively promoting, if necessary by force, 'free markets.' It stands as a variety of developmental totalitarianism (as it claims that there is no alternative to its model) and an utopia based on the fantasy of high-technology modernisation.



### Social Capital

Social capital is one of the most loosely employed and perhaps abused (through reductionist interpretations) terms since the 1990s. It meant to provide a critique of neo-classical economic thought, which tends to view human beings as rational economic consumers, and suggests that human beings have a variety of non-economic (and hence 'cultural') 'capitals' that they strategically draw upon in their day-to-day survival. However, in its reductionist interpretations social capital came to be identified as an 'asset' or a 'resource', which could be produced in 'networks of communities'. The persistence of poverty in developing countries, the neo-liberals argue, is largely due to lack of appropriate 'social capital' rather than any external constraints such as global inequality or colonialism or the monopolistic tendencies of market capitalism.



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# Community Participation, Decentralisation & Democratic Empowerment

A BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCE

Prepared by Akhila Seetharaman

## Part A ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abadzi, Helen (2002) 'India: Education Sector Development in the 1990s, A Country Assistance Evaluation', OED Working Papers, World Bank.

This report assesses the impact of The World Bank's support to the education sector in India. Until the late 1980s, India was firmly against external aid for education. However, with the adoption of universal education as a goal, the Department of Education revised its policy to allow external funding. The World Bank's support to education in India totals approximately US\$ 2 billion today. It has completed four vocational and technical training projects and is currently supporting six basic education projects. Although the basic education projects are still being implemented, the author makes some basic observations about them. According to the report, commitment levels of central and state level officials are high, enrolments have surpassed expectations including that of girls, teachers' training institutes have been set up, a large number of teachers have been appointed, 171,000 village education committees have been formed and infrastructure in the form of school buildings and toilets have been built. Areas of concern include the low levels of educational achievement, paucity of teachers, especially in

poorer areas, uneven quality of teacher training, problems with the construction of infrastructure and limited level of functioning of village education committees in poorer areas.

The report points out that the evaluation is difficult due to several reasons. Donors are not able to access project sites unannounced and therefore unable to observe the inputs being given to children. Access to data and studies on outputs is limited. Studies are carried out only by select agencies. The methodology of data collection is often questionable and data is not completely reliable. Some agreements between the government and donor are unwritten and fail to deal with controversial issues. Procedures for financial accountability are inadequate.

However, the OED rates the outcomes of the educational programme as "satisfactory, with high relevance, efficacy and efficiency". It rates institution development as 'modest' and sustainability as 'likely'. The OED recommends that projects be verified independently and data from the programme be more openly available to donors. The document also evaluates the overall success of international development aid in the education sector and examines various issues facing the sector.





Agrawal, A. and Ribot, J. (2000) 'Accountability in Decentralization: A framework with South Asian and West African Cases' *Journal of Developing Areas*.

The authors put forth a framework by which to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of decentralisation in instances where it has purportedly been carried out. While acknowledging the analyses of decentralisation in terms of three categories: democratic, fiscal and administrative, the authors place three elements: actors, powers and accountability, at the centre of their framework of analysis. Much depends on how powers are transferred to actors, placed at different levels of social action. The authors identify four types of powers that when transferred, result in some extent of decentralisation: the power to create rules, make decisions on the use of resources and opportunities, implement rules and ensure compliance and finally adjudicate disputes. They suggest that the key to recognising true decentralisation is identifying the direction of accountability. When the devolution of powers makes local actors upwardly accountable, the process is merely deconcentration or administrative decentralisation, whereas when local actors are made downwardly accountable, political decentralisation can be said to take place. Decentralisation is directly concerned with democracy and enabling people to have a say in their own affairs. Mere participation does not lead to decentralisation.

The paper goes on to analyse specific cases of decentralisation in forest management in Kumaon in India, Terai in Nepal, Senegal and Mali (mostly a recent phenomenon) in terms of the framework. While in India, forest management has been historically bureaucratic and centralised and can be traced back to the

days of colonial control, forest management in Nepal has also been largely a responsibility of the state. Senegal and Mali, both French colonies, also have a similar history of forest management. While forests in India and Nepal have significant commercial as well as subsistence value, forests in Senegal and Mali are valued mainly for their subsistence produce as well as wood fuel. All efforts at decentralisation in recent times have been restricted such that local communities can utilise only subsistence produce. While the efforts in India and Mali can be categorised as democratic decentralisation (with the Kumaon example being a more successful one), the efforts in Nepal and Senegal fall into the category of deconcentration. The authors observe that the institutional underpinnings of decentralisation efforts will determine how sustainable they are and whether they can be generalised.

Aycrigg, Maria (1998) Participation and the World Bank: Success, Constraints, and Responses, Social Development Papers, Paper Number 29, The World Bank, November.

This working paper, prepared for an international conference 'Upscaling and Mainstreaming Participation of Primary Stakeholders: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward' held in Washington, D.C. in November 1998, deals with the internal aspects of the World Bank's approach to participation. The 1994 document, "The World Bank and Participation" set the tone for a strong thrust on participation in World Bank's developmental endeavours. This paper attempts to look at the progress made, and lessons learnt along the way and shed light on the way forward. It is based on focused group discussions with regional staff of the Bank,



desk evaluations and field office responses to questionnaires.

Internal evaluations with the staff in 1996 on incentives and disincentives to use participation showed that participation was widespread but thin, managers need to see results, shortened timelines, budget cuts and the Bank's "expert culture" undermine participation. Some of the key issues that arise from the review include the Bank's role in promoting participatory development via its good relations with governments, the use of participation to support good governance, evolving systems of measurement to demonstrate the effects of participation, expanding participation to include design and implementation stages of projects and not merely appraisal, and working towards cross-sectoral integration for maximum impact.

**Baker, G. (2000)** 'Civil Society Theory and Republican Democracy', University of Salford, Paper for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association-U.K., London, April.

The author presents an analysis of the republican model of civil society as suggested in Hannah Arendt and Vaclav Havel's theories of the public sphere and questions whether this form of civil society is too utopian to really deepen democracy.

The increasing rhetoric of self-government tied into the concept of civil society gained prominence with the end of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. While liberal and neo-liberal viewpoints see civil society in instrumental terms, as essentially apolitical, the republican view sees it as the end objective of democracy and the 'future of politics'. The

author studies Havel's conception of civil society where individuation is essential for social cooperation and where 'living in truth' becomes the basis of civic participation. He examines Arendt's perspectives of 'elementary republics' that stand in opposition to the mass politics and attempts an analysis of their theories with respect to markets and modernity.

The republican model puts forth a case for the protection of the private sphere in the interests of the public, active citizenry that acts out of a need to shape their own world, and a focus on a decentralised model of government, instead of political action.

While the republican ideal of self government may seem very noble theoretically, the author wonders how it will translate in empirical terms. Self government, when maximised, becomes the state. To what extent should there be self government for it to be untouched by politics and what should be the role of the state, asks the author. He points out that the republican model fails to suggest how self government should interact with the market. The market is a global power; whereas self government is a necessarily local power. This model is also unclear on the institutions that could act as agencies to implement self government. Finally, he asks whether it is really possible for individuals to 'live in truth' independently without external influence, and if this is possible, whether this be translated to a collective experience of autonomy.

**Beausang, Francesca (2000)** 'Democratising Global Governance: The Challenges of the World Social Forum', Management of Social Transformations, Discussion Paper 59, UNESCO, Paris.



This paper, from the UNESCO social science research programme, summarises the debates that occurred in two UNESCO round table conferences during the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, January 2000. The discussions centred on democracy, democratic development, civil society and governance. It began with an examination of democratic processes at the national level and went on to study global processes. Governance and the shift from technocratic governance to 'joint governance' was an important area of discussion. In an attempt to reach a better understanding of democracy and governance, non-democratic forms of governance in some East Asian states were also studied. The group agreed that good governance must be compatible with both democracy and development.

**Bebbington, Tony, Carroll, Tom, and Schmidt, Mary (1996)** 'Participation through Intermediary NGOs' Social Development Papers, Paper Number 12, ESSD Network, The World Bank, February.

This paper is one among a series written for the World Bank's *Participation Sourcebook*. It recognizes the key role of intermediary organizations, specifically developmental NGOs in delivery of aid and resources to the intended beneficiaries, in identifying and giving voice to community concerns, training and building capacity within communities and promoting organization and management.

The challenges before the World Bank are to identify NGOs that have the necessary skills and capacity required on specific projects, ensure that the Bank follows practices that enhance rather than weaken partner NGOs'

participatory character, and encourage NGOs and governments to align their styles of operation. The Bank tends to work more with operational NGOs than advocacy NGOs.

The paper delineates three different levels of participatory practice of NGOs. The first level involves consultation with clients to match supply with demand, the second involves closer collaboration with the community being encouraged to share responsibility, costs and some decision making, and the third, builds capacity within the community with the ultimate goal of devolving power to the community.

One of the operational challenges faced by the World Bank is that of reconciling government and donor procedures that favour quick disbursement of funds with participatory approaches. The question of scale is another dilemma as most NGOs that have highly participatory approaches function at a very small scale. Many NGOs themselves lack the capacity and therefore need help building the requisite capacity. NGOs that are at the third level of participation often have hostile or distrustful relations with the government. The paper tackles each of these challenges in detail with reference to the experiences of the World Bank.

The paper recognizes that community development through NGOs has plenty of both problems and opportunities. It highlights the need for transparency and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, flexible approach that allows for learning along the way, opportunities to reinforce common-interest groups, a supportive state environment and a willingness to work with donors for a shared vision.



Betsill, M., Michele and Correl, Elisabeth (2001) 'NGO Influence in International Environmental Negotiations: A Framework for Analysis', *Global Environmental Politics* 1:4 November 2001, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In this article, the authors provide a framework to assess NGO involvement in the specific area of international environmental agreements, recommending that researchers use multiple data types and sources. They identify two relevant aspects: one, the information provided by NGOs influencing any given set of negotiations and two, the behavioural changes that the actors make based on this information.

Non governmental organisations have come to play a critical role in global environmental politics, whether at the international level of agreements and treaties across countries, the domestic level, influencing governments when they create and implement policies, or at the level of individuals where they shape people's perceptions on environmental issues. Their contribution has drawn attention from academics around the world. However, as the authors point out, there is very little concrete evidence of exactly 'how NGOs matter'. There are several reasons for this. Studies on environmental NGOs are seen as a single body of work. NGO influence is seen as a vague influence and not identified in specific terms. Most studies fail to make the ultimate linkages between NGO work and outcomes in the environmental policies.

Bhat, M.K. and Nagaraja, Bhargavi (2000), *Building Civil Society*, India Civil Society Collective, Bangalore

This compilation of papers presented at an international conference in Bangalore (July 1999) on 'Building Civil Society' organised by the India Civil Society Collective in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Centre for Civil Society Studies.

The papers span the entire range of issues under the umbrella theme of civil society including the grassroots movements in India, the impact of globalisation on civil society, the changing nature of employment, decentralisation and public advocacy and express concern about globalisation and the shift from 'plan to market'.

D.L. Sheth provides an account of grassroots movements in India. Shobha Raghuram calls for a 'politics of human agency instead of a politics of the market' in her paper on Civil Society, Social Movements and the State in India. Yamini Atmavilas looks at the conditions of female workers in the Third world in civil society and Bhargavi Nagaraj examines violence against women in the context of state and civil society. Other papers look at linkages between the voluntary sector and the government, child labour and civil society and participatory development.

The compilation also includes the Bangalore Declaration issued at the culmination of the conference that critically analyses the strengths and weaknesses of non-profit organisations, the government, and business sector and suggests strategies for cooperation to build civil society.

Blackburn, James, Chambers, Robert, and Gaventa, John, (IDS, Sussex) (1999) 'Learning to take time and go slow: Mainstreaming participation in development



and the comprehensive development framework (CDF)' Operations Evaluations Department, World Bank.

While 'participation' refers to a process whereby primary stakeholders (the people) shape the development initiatives that affect them, 'mainstreaming participation' involves bringing about institutional reforms that enable participatory methodologies to become fully incorporated in all development projects and programmes. This paper deals with experiences of mainstreaming and upscaling participation with reference to the Comprehensive Development Framework. It includes lessons from participatory appraisal with respect to poverty assessment, lessons from various government efforts to upscale participation, and the experiences of donor agencies such as the DFID, GTZ, USAID and the World Bank. The paper also looks at mainstreaming participation and the CDF and provides guidelines on how the World Bank should approach participation.

**BMZ (ND)** 'Cross-sectoral Strategy, Participatory Development Cooperation', Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Bonn.

The Participation Strategy establishes the terms of reference for the design given to bilateral official development cooperation and implementing agencies. The Strategy focuses on inclusion of men and women who lack the social and economic opportunities to participate in decision making on their lives. Participation strategy can be of two kinds: the first kind supports participation through civil society building. The second kind of participation strategy that focuses on the design of participatory projects and

programmes under the development cooperation agenda. The paper identifies the objectives of participation in development, examines experiences of German development cooperation so far with respect to participation and provides guidelines for the future.

**Boggs, Carl (2001)** 'Social Capital and Political Fantasy' *Theory and Society* 30: 281-297, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands.

In this insightful essay, the author presents a sharp critique of Robert Putnam's famous work, *Bowling Alone*. At the core of Putnam's arguments is the idea that American civic life has experienced a sharp decline since the late 1960s, resulting in a fall in 'social capital' – social networks of people and a consequent decline in public engagement with politics. The author's contention is that Putnam's basic argument is wrong to begin with and that American civic life has not declined. Instead, he argues that Putnam's definition of 'civic life' is extremely narrow and refers only to traditional, conformist activities such as picnics, dinner parties and church attendance. He points out that Putnam's arguments collapse in the face of the numerous new civil and social movements, such as the environmental movement, the women's movement, gay and lesbian movements that have steadily grown over the last three decades. While there has been no decline in social capital, argues the author, there has been a marked disillusionment with politics and therefore a rejection of political participation. Putnam fails to make this differentiation and instead equates social capital and participation in civic life with political activity.

While Putnam cites declining church attendance as evidence of falling social capital,



the author counters that this is only part of the secularization of American society. The decline in union membership, he attributes to the burgeoning of a blue collar service class. The author says that Putnam fails to even acknowledge the numerous cults, gangs, militias and patriarchal movements that may not be viable modes of political engagement, but are certainly communal and involve plenty of cooperation and group activity.

Putnam attributes much of civic and political disengagement to the addiction to television. The author points out that while television may be a factor, it is by no means the only factor influencing political engagement. Putnam, he points out, fails to address the looming issue of the impact of corporatisation of America altogether. Amidst the numerous lacunae in Putnam's argument, he also notes that the argument corresponding to the title 'Bowling Alone' of changes in membership of bowling clubs and its captivating metaphor are false. People may have stopped becoming members of bowling clubs but this could be because they are playing golf or other newer sports and fitness activities.

**Bratton, M. (1994)** 'Civil Society and Political Transition in Africa', IDR Reports, Volume 11, No. 6, Institute for Development Research.

The author studies the case of Africa and looks at the possibilities for civil society in African countries. After defining civil society and differentiating it from political society and the market economy, the author identifies the core characteristics of civil society discourse as the critique of state domination of civil life, preference of reform over revolution, and recourse to political change through

negotiations and elections - all characteristics that are in evidence in Africa, which has undergone a sea-change in the 1990s with a shift to democracy. In the early years of independence, with the sovereignty of the state a priority, ruling elites administered 'de-participation' of sorts with a clampdown on autonomous associational activity. But autonomous activity beyond the purview of the state flourished, especially by way of an informal/black economy. This led many African regimes to re-assess their position with regard to civil society organisation and there has been an explosion of these organisations since.

The author looks at various forms of association in Africa, including the unique form of 'national conference', the proliferation of public communication and the emergence of norms of civic engagement. He observes that while the strong sense of group solidarity, a core feature of African societies, is an enabling characteristic for promoting civil society, it also has a predilection for a culture of 'neopatrimonialism'. Abysmal economic conditions prevent popular participation. The author also provides a valuable account of the process of political transition and the role and nature of civil society during its various phases.

**Bray, Mark (1999)** 'Community Partnerships in Education: Dimensions, Variations, and Implications', EFA Thematic Study, World Bank, October.

Identifying the 1990 Jomtien Conference as an agenda-setting event that produced the World Declaration on Education for All, the author undertakes to examine the issues related to Article 7 of the Declaration that deals with the necessity of community and private



stakeholder participation in education. The paper focuses on community-government partnerships and also addresses the issue of decentralization and its impact on participation. The author expands on rationales for participation, follows the changing concept of participation through the decades, and tackles issues that arise when operationalising participation, particularly issues related to school governance and financing.

Starting with a review of the forms of partnership and participation and their applications, the author goes on to look at community participation in governance through village education committees, parents' associations and school boards. Community financing and innovations to improve retention, educational achievement and equity comprise the next sections. The author lists general principles for partnership and suggests ways to leverage participation.

The 1990s have seen significant changes in education provision. Education provision has had to be expanded to cope with population growth. While governments are still considered responsible for the provision of education, the role of non-governmental organizations is widening and gaining legitimacy in the process. Partnerships, between government and non-government players as well community groups and individuals have proliferated in the 1990s. Although there are many challenges before partnerships, they are driven by a common commitment towards providing better quality education.

Carathors, T. (1999) 'Civil Society' [electronic version] *Foreign Policy*. Winter 1999.

The author takes a critical view of the concept of 'civil society' and cautions against investing it with unlimited power and inherently good intentions. Use of the term has come a long way from the times of the ancient Greeks when it was synonymous with the state, through the works of Enlightenment philosophers like Thomas Paine and Hegel when it came to refer to an arena apart from the state, and later, its revival through the works of Marx and Gramsci as a sphere for 'struggle against tyranny'.

In the 1990s, an era of privatisation and the rollback of the responsibilities of the state, it has come to be seen as a means of 'social renewal'. NGOs are central to the present-day idea of civil society, and are seen as representing the people's interests. The author cautions that NGOs do not always accurately represent views of the people and are often driven by single-interest groups. While civil society may seem like a 'warm and fuzzy' concept, not all civil society organisations represent 'the public good', which is in itself a highly contested domain, according to the author.

He goes on to argue that civil society and democracy do not necessarily go hand in hand and cites the example of Germany during Hitler (which had a proliferation of associational life) and Japan (which is a stable democracy with a weak civil society in western terms). Similarly, economic success does not necessarily depend on civil society as illustrated by the examples of South Korea and Bangladesh. He observes that civil society does not necessarily weaken the state. Proof of this is the U.S.A.

He argues that global civil society is both feeding and being fed by globalisation. But



while there has been a proliferation of transnational civil society organisations in recent times, many of these organisations are simply Western organisations projecting into developing countries. Transnational civil society organisations have been around for a long time. He cites the Roman Catholic Church as an example.

**Carroll, T.F. (2001)** 'Social Capital, Local Capacity Building and Poverty Reduction' Social Development Paper No. 3, Asian Development Bank.

The term 'social capital' has gained currency in the last decade or so, simultaneous with 'civil society'. It refers to 'networks of civic engagement' i.e. how people are connected to each other such that they may better confront poverty and utilise opportunities before them. This study by the ADB was undertaken to identify the dimensions of social capital that are relevant to the institution's work, as well as the implications in terms of operations, if the ADB is to harness social capital in its endeavours.

The author examines the concept of social capital and suggests categories of social capital such as family and kinship connections, community networks, cross-sectoral linkages, institutional policy frameworks, socio-political relations and social norms and values. He goes on to look at social capital in relation to the management of common resources and projects, specifically ADB projects in water and forestry. He observes that while over two thirds of the projects incorporated devolution of powers, very few had capacity building as a stated objective. Social assessments of these operations were generally weak in terms of institution analysis. While making

observations, the author also recognises innovations that empower local groups in Nepal in the area of water supply and sanitation.

The study concludes that social capital *can* be leveraged for poverty reduction and the ADB can contribute to this process by encouraging local capacity building as well as building linkages above and beyond the community. ADB must capitalise on its strength in dealing with local and meso level institutions. Finally, the ADB must aim for a greater thrust on local institutions in its social assessment and evaluation process.

**Chandoke, Neera (2003)**, 'When the Voiceless Speak: A Case Study of the Chhatthisgarh Mukti Morcha' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Pub. New Delhi.

The author establishes how the concept of civil society hides more than it makes explicit about the nature of civil society itself, which is deeply divided, conflicted and hierarchical. The paper is a study of the Chhatthisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) in the state of Chatthisgarh where state institutions in complicity with dominant owners of capital used governance against the people of Chatthisgarh for decades.

She notes that the pre-eminence of civil society in governance is based on two assumptions. First, that the failure of governance can be traced to the unwillingness of government institutions to perform their tasks and second, that an active and empowered civil society will result in good governance.

However, governance and civil society cannot be detached from the social, economic and political context. In Chhatthisgarh,



government institutions were not only unresponsive, but seriously oppressive. The author provides a substantial account of the struggles of mine workers in Chhattisgarh under the leadership of Shankar Guha Niyogi and traces the growth of the CMM and its activities in the state. Neera Chandoke is currently Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi.

**Chaudhuri, Shubham and Heller, Patrick (2002)** 'The plasticity of participation: evidence from a participatory governance experiment', Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, Columbia University, July.

The Kerala government initiated significant steps towards decentralisation in 1996 under the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning. Significant planning and budgetary functions were devolved from state-level institutions to local municipalities and panchayats. An integral part of the decentralisation process was the Gram Sabha, a public meeting, held twice a year at the panchayat level, where citizens participate in decision making regarding policies and priorities. The authors study participation at the Gram Sabha across 990 gram panchayats in Kerala in the first two years of decentralisation and attempt to explain results from the data through social capital, rational choice and social-historical participatory paradigms.

The authors observe that while there is plenty of empirical work available on participation in democratic processes, most of the work is based on the assumption that everybody has the opportunity to associate and participate in political processes and ignores the very real

impact of asymmetric social relations on a group's participation.

At the same time participatory democracy is seen as a very long-term process, one that can be influenced only over a period of time. From their study, the authors conclude that participation is more dynamic than democratic theorists think. Their spatial and temporal analyses of the data are almost paradoxical. While a spatial analysis revealed that local social structures circumscribe participation severely, the temporal analysis revealed that the quality and composition of participation could change fairly dramatically over time. Therefore, the findings support the "constructability" of collective capacities for participation" at the grassroots level, and suggest that a proper understanding of the interaction between democratic institutions and social and political factors influencing participation would be very useful in shaping public policies.

**Colleta, Nat J. and Perkins, Gillian (1995)** 'Participation in Education', Paper No. 1, Environment Department Papers, Social Policy and Resettlement Division, World Bank, February.

The paper studies the relevance of participation to the World Bank with respect to its operations in the education sector. Participation has both costs and benefits, according to the authors. They identify the benefits of participation as improving the relevance and quality of education by including parents and the community in decision making and supervision, improving ownership and building consensus, reaching remote and marginalised groups, mobilising resources and building institutional capacity.



The initial costs of participation are high and participation often means delays in the project implementation as success must depend on the commitment of individuals and groups within the community. Overall, participation demands that the 'task manager' be more tolerant of uncertainty and exercise less control over the outcome.

**Corneille, F. and Shiffman, J. (2003)** 'Scaling up Participation at USAID'. Syracuse University, NY.

The authors analyse the efforts to introduce participatory approaches at USAID, the United States Agency for International Development in the 1990s. Like other aid agencies, USAID faces the task of translating the paradigm shift towards participatory development in development discourse into its programmes at the ground level. While doing so it must contend with a number of external factors, which include changing national priorities and state interference, global political crises and instability in recipient states, as well as internal factors like resource constraints, a top-down approach within the organisation, rigid systems and the absence of suitable reward structures to encourage employees to use participatory methods in programmes.

**Cornwall, Andrea (2000)**, 'Beneficiary, Consumer, Citizen', SIDA Studies 2, SIDA.

The author follows the evolution of community participation in development in a changing backdrop of development discourse from the 70s through the 90s.

What began as a realisation of the need to involve communities and help them help

themselves in the seventies, soon grew into a valuable technique with attractive spin off benefits. Calls for participation over the decades can be traced to one or more of three lines of arguments in its favour. The efficiency and effectiveness argument adopted by the World Bank in the 1970s sees participation as a simpler, cost effective technique to implement development initiatives. The second, self-determination argument evolved from popular movements and places participation squarely in the people's agenda to gain control over resources and regulative institutions. The third argument of mutual learning combines elements from the other two arguments and puts forward a model where people benefit from external agencies and are able to transform the situations.

Changes in the relations between people, development agencies and government are reflected in participation lexicon. Individuals of the community, first simply referred to as "people" came to be called "beneficiaries" and later, in keeping with market liberalisation, "consumers" of development efforts. The term "ownership" now refers to the community "buying into" the development initiative and has nothing to do with absolute ownership of property, finances or establishments. Far from its use in people's struggles to control their resources, the term "empowerment" has now become an automatic consequence of economic and institutional reform.

The author examines the chameleon nature of the term "participation", which takes different shades depending on the context of use. A model where external agencies enter the scenario to "do participation" with a community must be closely critiqued. While



participation is generally a “good thing”, when it is used in an instrumentalist way, it is not very different from colonialism. It has been accused of quashing local resistance to reform, buying consent and emerging as a form of taxation where the local demands for development are diverted from the government to local initiatives. It has even been called “structural adjustment with a human face”. Without external guidance participation can promote inequalities as the community transfers community prejudices and hierarchies in their participation in development initiatives.

The paper cites various “pathways to participation”. Induced participation where people are involved in implementing the project, invited participation where they are involved in consultations on policy and full participation that aims to create an active and assertive citizenry capable of carrying out governance reforms. Thus, while participation translates to cost sharing and efficiency at one level, a more substantial interpretation of participation includes capacity building and empowerment as significant features.

**de Graaf, M. and Srivastava, R. (2001)** ‘The Contribution of Dutch Co-financing Organisations to Civil Society Building in India’, Synthesis Report Study commissioned by Steering Committee for the Evaluation of the Netherlands’ Co-financing Programme, March.

This study of the impact of Dutch co-financing organisations on civil society building in India is one of three evaluations commissioned by the Steering Committee for Programme Evaluation on civil society building. A significant portion of Dutch

development aid is channelled through four co-financing organisations: Cordaid, Hivos, Icco and Novib. The evaluation was carried out jointly by Arcadis BMB and CSDS. Out of 87-CFA funded partner organisations working in the field of CSB, the team selected 20 as case studies. The study aimed to provide insight on the relevance of partner organisation in civil society building, the effects of their efforts, and the quality and effectiveness of the donors’ contribution.

The study begins with an introduction to civil society building in India and the concept itself. It goes on to look at the activities of co-financing agencies in India, their relationships and expenditures. It then looks closely at partner organisations, their perspectives on CSB and their impact. Finally, it examines the role of CFAs and draws conclusions based on the findings of the study.

The evaluation revealed that while POs are extremely relevant to CSB, especially as conduits to channel external resource into local processes, they are not complete solutions and have their disadvantages. While they create networks and enhance citizenship they have not, so far, adequately prepared the poor for the market. The study concludes that donor support has been positive and that there is a good match between the donor objectives and the objectives of the POs. While the Dutch agencies are humble in their approach and give plenty of flexibility to POs, they did not offer much non-financial support which could be very useful. The study observes a lack of clarity and vagueness about CFA policies although they are generally in the right direction. The study observes that Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (PMES) of partner organisations are weak and in many



instances the target group does not have any control over the PO's operations.

**De Shalit, Avner (1997)** 'Where Philosophy Meets Politics: The Concept of the Environment', OCEES Research Paper No 13, November.

This paper is a critique of environmental philosophy. The author suggests that a significant portion of the environmental movement is in fact looking at the concept of environment in a political manner, disengaged from an ecological understanding. He calls this phenomenon 'conceptual instrumentalism', where a concept is used to mean something apart from its original meaning.

Environment is a collection of ecosystems and ecosystems comprise relationships, which may be natural or social. While natural relationships may be viewed objectively, social relationships between 'moral agents' can only be viewed subjectively. The author examines the differences between a scientific view and the social discourse on environment and ecology in this respect. Both Deep Ecology and Eco-feminism use the concept of environment instrumentally, according to the author. He provides a critique of both philosophies.

The author emphasizes that the 'environment' is a politically weighted concept and warns that it should be used carefully. The knowledge that there is no objective 'is' should be kept in mind when differentiating between what is desirable and what 'is'. He recommends that the theory of intrinsic value be modified such that the focus shifts from relationships to objects. Finally he suggests that in the interests of the environment, environmental

philosophy and political theory should not be combined.

**DFID (1999)** The Participatory Approaches Learning Study (PALS), Overview Report, International NGO Training and Research Centre for the Department of International Development, October.

This is a study commissioned by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) in 1996 before the formation of the Department for International Development. It aims to assess the extent to which ODA-funded projects ensure stakeholder (both primary and intermediary) participation. The report presents recommendations of INTRAC alongside DFID's responses to each recommendation. Since the White Paper on International Development in November 1997, DFID has significantly increased its focus on civil society and participation. However, this report was brought out before 1997 and therefore assesses DFID's approach at the time.

The study is a result of research in four areas of DFID's operations: India, Bangladesh, South East Asia and North and West Africa. The study evaluates DFID initiatives in health, education, forestry and public utilities vis-à-vis stakeholder participation.

The study recommends that DFID give more attention to building staff capacity to engage stakeholders and employ participation as a strategy and not merely maintain it in principle. It also recommends adapting the Project Cycle Management to become more flexible and accountable to suit a participatory approach. The British government has identified the need to work with governments



that are committed to eradicating poverty in their countries. Thus, there has been a shift from supporting discrete projects to long-term institutional partnerships with governments. However, the study observes that participation of stakeholders is essential for institutional partnerships to be meaningful. The PALS study also comments on human resources in DFID and ways to institutionalise participation and partnerships.

**DFID (2000)** *Realising Human Rights for Poor People: Strategies for achieving the international development targets*, Department for International Development, October.

This document spells out the broad approach of the DFID towards meeting the international development target to halve poverty by 2015. It identifies the objective of DFID's human rights strategy as enabling all people to be active citizens with rights, expectations and responsibilities and takes a rights-based approach to poverty alleviation. DFID lists three principles that govern the incorporation of a rights approach into development: people's participation, building societies that are inclusive and strengthening institutions that fulfil their obligations to the people.

The document goes on to look at the centrality of human rights to achieving the international development targets and presents an overview of the main international human rights treaties and their sphere of influence. It also surveys recent efforts to improve human rights and enumerates lessons that these initiatives provide, as well as the role of the private sector. Finally, it looks at the steps that the

international community needs to take, and more specifically, the agenda before DFID.

**ESSD Network (2002)** *World Bank-Civil Society Collaboration—Progress Report for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001*.

This report details the interface between the World Bank and civil society in the years 2000 and 2001. The Bank collaborates with civil society by consulting civil society organizations on developmental initiatives. It also facilitates dialogue between civil society and governments to enhance the impact of World Bank supported poverty reduction programmes.

The report features discussions on its engagement at the country level, including the involvement of civil society organization in Country Assistance Strategies, World Bank-funded projects and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. It also looks the contribution of civil society organizations in the global policy dialogue, including debates on the policies and strategies of the World Bank, the World Bank-Trade Union dialogue, and the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review initiative.

The World Bank's emphasis on community driven development and support for the creation of environments that are conducive to civil society building as well as civil society in World Bank grants programmes are elaborated here. The report features tables and graphs, including a listing of its interface with civil society in various countries.

**European Commission (2001)** 'Report on the European Initiative for the Implementation of Human Rights and Democracy in 2000', Commission Staff Working Document, European Commission, Brussels, May.



The document presents an overview of activities in the area of human rights and democracy funded by the European Commission in external relations, under Chapter B7-70 of the EU budget. Not only does it provide an outline of the thematic areas and strategies, but also presents an analysis of evaluation procedures and overall performance. During the year 2000, over 97 million euros from this part of the budget was allocated to human rights and democracy projects. For the first time the human rights and democracy department of the External Relations Directorate took charge of all eleven human rights and democracy budget lines under EIDHR. Year 2000 was also the year of radical changes in the management of the EC's external assistance programme and a restating of the EC's commitment to human rights through the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The report lists the main thematic areas of EIDHR as democratisation and the rule of law, pluralist civil society, confidence building and the restoration of peace with specific focus on initiatives for women and children. EU actions in each are listed along with relevant resolutions in the European Parliament and descriptions of the projects. A detailed account of the geographic break-up of supported projects is also provided. Support to human rights projects in Asia in year 2000 has risen ten-fold since 1996-1999.

**Evans, Alison (2000)** Poverty Reduction in the 1990s: An Evaluation of Strategy and Performance, World Bank, OED, September.

This document seeks to study the performance of poverty reduction strategies adopted by the World Bank in 1990, through the decade. The

*World Development Report 1990: Poverty* outlined a poverty agenda for the World Bank based on three main strategies: broad-basing growth to generate income-earning opportunities for the poor, improving access to education, nutrition, health care and other social services and putting in place safety nets and ensuring well-targeted transfers to support poor people in remote and resource-poor areas. The guidelines called for the Bank to align all its operations with the poverty reduction strategy such that Bank assistance would be substantially linked with countries' commitment to reducing poverty.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess how well instruments of the Bank have been aligned with the 1990 strategy, how well policies and projects have been able to meet poverty reduction objectives and how relevant the 1990 strategy is today.

The report traces the process of implementation of the strategy since the 1990 including the evolution of Country Assistance Strategies, poverty assessments, and public expenditure reviews, efforts towards broad-basing growth and designing safety nets, as well as the changing composition of the Bank's lending. The report also looks at the effectiveness of the poverty reduction strategy with respect to different countries and specific projects. Finally, the report makes recommendations on how the Bank should take poverty reduction strategies forward.

**Fiske, Edward, B. (1996)** 'Decentralization of Education: Politics and Consensus', Directions in Development Series, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington D.C.



The author studies the process of decentralisation in education as adopted by various nations, examines its advantages and disadvantages, and looks at how far the process has been successfully implemented and whether once implemented, it has achieved its stated objectives. He examines decentralization with respect to improvements in the quality of education, administrative efficiency, financial efficiency, attainment of political goals, and effects on equity and presents examples from various countries to illustrate. He makes some general observations about decentralisation. Decentralisation can be used solely to achieve political objectives without impacting the quality of education or efficiency of the system. This is often a motive of political leaders. Outside agencies however, propagate decentralisation to improve the quality of education. Administrative decentralisation by itself will not result in any significant change. He observes that decentralisation can and often does transform the environment to become more favourable to better teaching and learning. While a favourable political environment is important for decentralisation, political stability is not essential. The author emphasises the need for alignment of political and other goals to build a consensus on the need for decentralisation and its objectives.

**Fowler, A. (2001)** 'Civil Society, NGDOs and Social Development: Changing the Rules of the Game', Occasional Paper 1, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

In this UNRISD paper, the author, an independent consultant based in Addis Ababa critically examines and evaluates the performance of NGDOs both domestic and

international, in social development since 1995. The author places NGDOs within the larger framework of development aid and makes recommendations for reform of the current paradigm of aid practice.

'Civil society' as an instrument and partner in social development has acquired prominence in recent times. NGDOs are seen as the representatives of civil society by international aid agencies. The author cautions that "one size does not fit all" and western definitions of civil society and civil society organisations cannot be applied in countries of the South.

He calls for a deeper contextual understanding of civil society by donor agencies. While NGDOs are potential agents for change, their challenges are many, and they often operate in unfair partnerships with donors. Further, their dependence on aid often brings into question their motivations.

Paradoxically, NGDOs cannot be agents of change without rooting ownership and commitment of change in the beneficiary community and government. The inability to have a long lasting impact is due to 'mutual dependency' where it is convenient for all stakeholders, (NGDO, community, government) that the NGDO to remain in the picture instead of withdrawing after a period of time. The author recognises the difficulties faced by NGDOs in grounding their endeavours in the local economic, social and cultural context while simultaneously ensuring that outputs are directly attributable to the intervention for accountability purposes.

In today's competitive aid environment, community participation has become staple fare, irrespective of the quality and



appropriateness of its use in the specific context. The author draws attention to a deeper understanding of participation, as an aspect of citizenship and an inherent non-discretionary right.

Like 'participation', use of the term 'partnership' loosely in development discourse has rendered the term meaningless. It hides imbalances in the aid system that undermine its credibility and role in social development.

He recommends 'changing the rules of the game', i.e. altering the culture and conditions that determine organisational and institutional behaviour. In terms of structure, aid systems need to become more 'client-centred' and pluralistic. NGDOs, which impact approximately 20% of the world's poor, are not a sufficient interface with civil society.

The author recommends the introduction of ombudspersons, to negotiate and deal justice in the aid system. He observes that NGDOs are heading towards a "development monoculture" where external practices and approaches are adopted irrespective of local context and best practices, to suit donor requirements. Aid systems need to actively broaden their contact with civil society in beneficiary countries beyond the limits of NGDOs to reach the poorest and most excluded groups of people.

**Fukuyama, Francis (2001)** 'Social capital, civil society and development' *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No 1, pp 7– 20, 2001.

The author defines social capital as 'an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals' and goes on to explore its nature, operation and outcomes in societies. He traces the

development of the term since its popularization by James Coleman as a 'public good', to more recent definitions of social capital as a private good that is influenced by externalities. He also looks at the problems of measuring social capital and addresses the question of its origin.

Social capital is the potential for groups to cooperate on the basis of existing shared norms. The author observes that while social scientists once thought that modernisation involved formalizing societal activities and unhinging them from informal cooperation and goodwill, social capital has many uses in free market democracies. In the economic sphere cooperation and trust can improve efficiency. In the political sphere, it produces a 'dense civil society' that the author considers a prerequisite for stable liberal democracy.

Like physical or human capital, social capital can be both positive and negative. An important feature of social capital is the 'radius of trust', which refers to the extent of trust that a group produces. Groups that have radii of trust that transcend the boundaries of the group generally have a positive influence on society. Groups that have strong in-group identities and tend to enhance distrust with those outside the group can have a negative influence on society as a whole.

The author advises that policy makers should be keenly aware that social capital cannot be produced by the state, that it is a result of shared religion, history or culture and that it has potential to benefit as well as damage society as a whole. Governments can facilitate the creation of social capital through education and by providing necessary public goods. He warns that government can have a detrimental



effect on social capital by involving themselves in areas that are better left to the private sector. He identifies religion and globalization as two external factors that encourage the generation of social capital.

**Galvin, Mary and Habib, Adam (2001)** 'Donors, State-NGO Relations, and the Politics of "Community-oriented" Decentralization', Donor Funding Project, School of Development Studies, University of Natal, November.

The study explores the impact of donor funding on decentralisation of the rural water sector in South Africa and Namibia. The authors differentiate between decentralisation that is state-oriented and decentralisation that is community-oriented. While the former results in the devolution of power to a lower level government which is independent of community, the latter results in true participation of the people.

The study provides an outline of the institutional context of local government in these countries and then goes on to look at programmes funded by DANIDA, GTZ and DFID and USAID in this sector. While in South Africa, donors and government officials claim that aid has merely supported government endeavours, government officials in Namibia are more open to donor advice and influence. However, the authors conclude that in both countries, although donor aid has significantly enabled decentralisation to take place, the form of decentralisation has been largely state-centred. The authors attribute this to the centralising tendencies in the two governments and predict that true community-oriented participation in South Africa and Namibia will be a long time coming.

**Jennings, R. (2000)** 'Participatory Development as a New Paradigm: The Transition of Development Professionalism', Community Based Reintegration and Rehabilitation in Post-Conflict Settings Conference, Washington D.C., October.

The author makes a case for participatory development in the context of divergent approaches that development institutions may adopt: "conventional professionalism" where the institution follows formal methodologies, and "people-centred" approaches of participatory development that require at least a 15% more investment but have proven to have more effective impact.

He points out that while there is a lack of consensus on whether participation is an appropriate approach through all stages of relief and development interventions, there is general agreement that authentic participation requires the participants to be involved in informing the programme and cannot be used to validate a preconceived idea or convince the community of an external programme.

The author asserts that development is a political process and requires engaging with the social and political context. Not only meeting people's needs but enabling people to identify their needs and make the decisions to remedy their situation. An environment of true participation promotes equity and decision making at the micro-level and like democracy, champions the sovereignty of people over the sovereignty of the state.

He puts forth rules of thumb for organisations attempting to incorporate participatory development that include following through with the approach, and making sustainable participation as important as the delivery of



aid itself. Participation is more costly. It entails a decentralised approach and requires the deployment of more field staff. While it can create friction of state authorities it reinforces the partnership with the local community.

In times of crisis when time is of the essence, participation often appears to be a luxury that humanitarian interventions can ill-afford. However, the author strongly suggests that it is never too early to help people help themselves and by bypassing local capacities, interventions inadvertently end up creating destructive patterns.

Incorporating participatory methods requires development institutions to actively “disempower” themselves in the process. This may well be the source of resistance to participation. But development institutions must be willing to subsume themselves in the interest of the people they are meant to benefit.

**Kothari, R. (1999)** ‘Issues in Decentralized Governance’ in Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (eds.) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

In this introduction to decentralisation, the author attempts to identify the essence of decentralisation in governance. Decentralisation is seen as a consequence of the opposing forces of globalisation and demands for local self governance. The failure of prior models of development to bridge disparities and translate macro development into successes at the micro level has paved the way for a ‘people-centred’ approach where people are at the centre of power and not just beneficiaries of development initiatives.

Critics of decentralisation say that power-sharing, which is at the heart of

decentralisation, could endanger national unity and lead to situations where dominant groups monopolise power for their interests. However, its advocates argue that while centralised governments may be more enlightened about protecting interests of minority groups, decentralisation goes hand in hand with democratic values and offers a more stable political system.

The author emphasises that decentralisation is not merely about creating structures of local self governance but responding to, and supporting local demands for these structures and investing them with power and resources. It is essential that power is redistributed to grassroots level institutions and committees.

Decentralisation must be accompanied by efforts to develop the local economy and provide employment as well as efforts to change unequal rural power structures and involve people, who would otherwise not get the opportunity, in local governance.

Finally, people must be given adequate training so that they are aware enough to utilise their power wisely.

**Kurtz, Marcus (1999)** ‘The Political Economy of Pro-Poor Policies in Chile and Mexico’ Paper prepared for WDR 2001 meetings. (August 16-17, United Kingdom, August 8, 1999)

Through an exploration of political and developmental histories and scenarios in Chile and Mexico, the author attempts to reach an understanding of the optimal conditions for poverty eradication through pro-poor policies. The author argues that while decentralisation may increase accountability, poverty eradication is more likely to be sustained in a



centralised democratic political system, especially in localities characterised by undemocratic practices.

He recommends that politicians support production-side measures for pro-poor benefits as opposed to consumption side measures as they have both social and developmental benefits. Ideally, there should be more than one reformist party in electoral running, so that no single party can take the poor as a given constituency.

In light of free market forms of economic organisation and their atomising impact on society, the author suggests that pro-poor policies should focus on building social capital among the poor and forming supportive coalitions in civil society that will, in turn, produce leaders, who can represent poor interests in the political sphere.

**MacDonald, L. (2000)** 'Citizenship, Participation and the Public Sphere in the Americas', Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, Summer Institute.

This paper is an overview of the state of citizen participation in the public sphere. The author traces the historical development of citizenship in the Americas and contrasts the trajectories of citizenship movements in developed countries like the United States and Canada with those of countries of Latin America, where citizenship emerged out of a 'tortuous' process of decolonisation, struggles against dictatorships and authoritarianism. Neo-liberal conception of citizenship restricts the role of the citizen to voting in elections and thus the state is 'insulated' from citizen demands for deepening democracy.

The author places the changing nature of citizenship in the context of economic restructuring and privatisation of areas that were so far in the public sphere. She identifies social exclusion, decline in social capital, social fragmentation and democratic deficit as major fallouts of the changed scenario.

**Mahanti, Sanghamitra (2002)** 'NGOs, Agencies and Donors in Participatory Conservation' *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 07.

The Rajiv Gandhi National Park, also called the Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka has come to be almost emblematic of a widespread dilemma faced by parks on the issue of conservation. How can local populations participate in the conservation of national parks? The Nagarhole forest area is home to three indigenous tribal populations: the Betta Kuruba, Jenu Kuruba and the Yerava. The author examines the several strands of relationships between different actors in the controversy: the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), NGOs for conservation and resettlement of tribals, tribal rights NGOs for sustained local use and participation of the indigenous people in conservation and donor agencies.

The Park comes under the India Eco-development Project, supported by the World Bank, which follows an integrated approach to conservation and development. The IEP aims to promote conservation by providing incentives and alternatives to populations living on the peripheries of the forest area. The author observes that while the eco-development project makes a remarkable attempt to work within the existing framework of policy and legislation, the issues at



Nagarahole require wider social transformation that can only come about through policy and legislative changes.

**Maloney, William, Smith, Graham and Stoker, Gerry (2000)** 'Social Capital and Urban Governance: Adding a More Contextualized 'Top-down' Perspective', *Political Studies*: 2000 Volume 48, 802–820, Blackwell Publishers.

The authors provide a critique of Robert Putnam's concept of social capital and attempt to place it in the context of governance. Social capital is a resource available among members of a community that facilitates collective action and collaborative effort. This resource is a combination of obligations, trust and expectations among members of a community and the norms and sanctions governing group relations in the community. Social capital has been used to explain variations in democratic activity in different areas. The authors argue that members of the Putnam-school fail to make two important connections in their conceptualization of social capital. In taking a bottom-up approach, they focus on associational activity in isolation of the state. The authors point out that political structures and institutions influence associational activity in an area just as 'social capital' influences the nature of governance in that area.

They also argue against Putnam's view of social capital or civic vibrancy of an area as an indicator of the quality of governance of an area. According to the authors, social capital is only a relational concept and is very context-specific. The authors use the example of political life in Birmingham through the decades to illustrate the working social capital and its relationship with governance. They

identify the political opportunity structure and institutional design as critical to social capital. They conclude by acknowledging the reciprocity between civil society and state in creating and maintaining social capital.

**Mander, Harsh (2003)** 'Corruption and the Right to Information' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Pub. New Delhi.

Information is essential for citizens to participate in governance. The author outlines the ways in which corruption permeates public life in India and prevents accountability to the people of India. Whether it is the siphoning of public funds or the illegal pricing of free government goods and services corruption hits the poor the hardest. It is a symptom of the collapse of institutions of governance that interface between the citizen and the state.

The author discusses how flaws in delivery system of public goods and services create environments that favour corruption and make it an activity of low risk and high return. While the Indian state has evolved checks to respond to corruption, such as anti-corruption laws, their implementation is contingent on performance of accountability mechanisms like accountants, the press, and critically on public leadership. In this scenario, the importance of citizen involvement cannot be stressed enough. Ordinary citizens must play a proactive role in this process to hold their government accountable. The author discusses the example of the MKSS (Majdoor Kisan Seva Sanghathan), a citizens' movement to make the right to information a reality in Rajasthan.

**Mathur, P.C. (1999)** 'Political Dynamics of the Institutional Pendulum of Democratic De-



centralization: An Overview' in Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (eds.) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

The author analyses the role of Panchayati Raj institutions in democratic decentralisation; their introduction in the early days of the Planning Commission and the subsequent rise and fall of PRIs through the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s can be understood in the context of political flux through the decades. The establishment of Panchayati Raj can be traced to the mission of 'democratic planning' undertaken soon after Independence. The term itself taps into a wealth of ancient Indian, specifically Hindu cultural and political meanings and implies 'government by the people'. The connotation implies a much larger role for PRIs which were simply proposed to have limited local-level decision-making powers to manage plans and projects of rural development.

The author places the invention of PRIs squarely in the context of Nehruvian economic planning of the 1950s where there was a need for rural development to take place in tandem with industrial capital formation; the latter being the focus of the planning of the time. The decline of PRIs, according to the author, can be attributed to the sidelining of PRIs to perform the role of development agencies or agencies of development administration instead of maintaining a planning orientation. Instead of being routed through PRIs, Plan funds began to be spent through a variety of administrative agencies.

Development by democratic decentralised means comes at a cost. The author explains how planning and parliamentary democracy are not particularly compatible. Further, the

devolution of powers to PRIs set the stage for democratic rivalry between democratically elected political elites and the second set of democratically elected leaders of PRIs. Although devolution of power made sense in theory, in practice it met with plenty of resistance within the democratic system itself.

The author provides a valuable examination of the political motivations behind support to devolution and decentralisation. The Indian National Congress introduced the concept of PRIs in the first place but gave it short shrift soon after they discovered that it provided space for alternative and oppositional power centres to emerge. The concept that was attractive as it had the potential to yield electoral pay-offs initially soon became the bone of contention, with different political parties playing out rivalries at this level.

Post 1989, there has been a significant change in the climate of India's political economy towards de-ruralisation and market orientation and away from planning. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act of 1993 constitutionally mandated PRIs. However, the ability of these institutions to hold their ground and 'plan for economic development and social justice' in the face of changes ushered by liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation is questionable.

McMahon, Edward R. (2001) 'Assessing USAID's Assistance for Democratic Development: Is it Quantity Versus Quality?', paper prepared for the American Political Science annual conference, San Francisco, August 30-September 2, 2001, published in *Evaluation*, Winter 2001 edition, Sage Publications, London.



The article examines the USAID's methods of evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of its support to democratic development. Through the decades, the United States has taken in lead in promoting democratic governments across the world and this is reflected in the USAID's focus on democracy.

The USAID supports democratic development in four areas, civil society development, competitive political processes, the rule of law and governance. The total support in 1999 was approximately \$634 million and the figure is increasing.

However, the author points out that the future of the sector depends on the USAID's ability to assess and articulate success of its projects. Evaluation is a common concern of donor agencies across the world but the author observes that USAID is a leader in developing a conceptual framework for evaluation.

In the early 1990s the Bush Administration and Congress passed the Government Performance Results Act that requires federal agencies, including USAID, to compare their performance with their stated goals and objectives. For USAID, the evaluation of the Democracy/Governance has been an uphill task with many natural challenges. The author recommends that the USAID explore the alternatives to 'objective, quantifiable and measurable' performance goals, provided for in the GPRA.

The author also recommends a disaggregate approach to assessing Democracy/Governance, a focus on priority countries, encouraging narrative reporting, expanding the use of methodologies that integrate quantitative and qualitative analysis and the evaluation of structural reforms.

Meenakshisundaram, S.S. (1999) 'Decentralization in Developing Countries' in Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (eds.) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Experiments in decentralisation in developing countries that became fairly prominent in the 80s serve as valuable lessons today. The author compares the experiences of India, Nigeria and China with local governments, and studies the features of each in its specific socio-political and historical context.

He delineates four types of decentralisation: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation, of which, he observes, devolution is the only type that involves a real transfer of authority. He defines decentralisation as a continuum of power-sharing, with centralisation at one end and complete autonomy at the other and emphasises the importance of 'democratic decentralisation' as a political ideal that has its institutional form in local government.

Through people's participation, it aims to empower the local citizen to choose their local rulers and have greater control over local development. While local governments are susceptible to inefficiency that stems from ignorance and lack of responsibility of elected councillors, experiences have demonstrated that the overall effect of local government is beneficial. Local government provides a forum for political education of the masses. Because of its proximity, it is able to directly respond to people's needs, has superior knowledge of the local conditions, and can ensure better accountability of public officials. It is ideally positioned to be a channel of communication between the centre and the people. Indirectly,



it checks the rise of alternative power centres at the local level and frees leaders at higher levels from involvement in local issues.

**Mehrotra, Santosh (2001)** 'Basic Social Services for All? Ensuring accountability through deep democratic decentralisation' *Occasional Paper* (Background paper for HDR 2002), Human Development Report Office, UNDP.

In this paper, the author expands and develops on Amartya Sen's Capability Approach to deepening democracy. Sen puts forth three arguments favouring democratic and political freedoms: the direct impact they have on basic capabilities, the constructive role they play in enabling people to conceptualise their needs and the instrumental role they play in enabling them to articulate them. The author suggests that Sen's delineation of simple and complex functioning (a functioning is a skill/ ability or desirable state of being) is faulty as they are interconnected. He recommends that in addition to individual capability, collective capability also be identified as an asset. Sen suggests that national democracy will enhance individual capabilities. The author argues that more than democracy at the national level, local democracy is the key to enhance participation.

He examines the issue of accountability in the contexts of colonialism and post-colonialism. The colonial administration was an entity apart from the people. Highly centralized and aloof, it aimed to maintain basic law and order and provide minimum services while enabling the extraction of surplus that enabled the officials to live much better than the average native. The post-colonial state inherited all these features, without the surplus. While the

state now functioned within a democracy, its structure and design of the bureaucracy remained intact. With expanding tasks and functions, increased monetary outlays, and aspects of democracy like electioneering, personal profiteering within the structure became a real temptation.

The author goes on to look at how accountability may be enhanced by deep democratized decentralisation, with particular focus on children's schooling in India. He cites examples of Madhya Pradesh which has made dramatic progress in the area of primary education and Rajasthan where literacy rates have risen significantly due to local participation and decentralisation. He identifies the Right to Information as key to the success of decentralisation. The author also provides a historical account of decentralisation in the developing and developed world.

**Mohanty, Prasanna, K. (1999)** 'Municipal Decentralization and Governance: Autonomy, Accountability and Participation' in Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (eds.) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

The author studies the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 that safeguards the interests of urban local governments so that they can function as effective democratic self-governing institutions and examine its implementation in view of varying conformity legislations across states. Overall, the Act aims to promote popular participation and self-governance.

The Act institutes some basic changes in the system of municipal governance, mandating regular elections for municipal corporations, providing a framework for the allocation of



government functions to urban local bodies, making it compulsory that states set up Finance Commissions to make recommendations on state-local revenue sharing and the appointment of Metropolitan and District Planning Committees with elected representatives playing an important role in preparing and monitoring development plans.

The author elaborates on the political, institutional and economic objectives of decentralisation and compares and contrasts municipal decentralisation across states, including the roles of Ward Committees and Planning Committees in each state. Autonomy, accountability and participation are important aspects of municipal decentralisation, he says. He also looks into issues of fiscal federalism and funds transfers and makes suggestions on further steps towards meaningful decentralisation in the municipality. The author belongs to the Indian Administrative Service.

**Mohanty, R., Tandon, R. (2003)** 'Introduction: Civil Society and Governance: Issues and Problematics' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

In recent times, civil society has come to be seen as an important player in development and governance. In the introduction to this book, the editors discuss the conceptualisation of 'civil society' in India and place it in the global context of the fall of communism, the shift towards neo-liberalism and the ascendancy of the market paralleled by a focus on democratisation.

A shift in terminology from 'government' to 'governance', suggests that the responsibility

of society must be shared by all stakeholders: the state, market and civil society, and not left solely to the state.

Not surprisingly, civil society has come to be associated with good governance. The authors question the premises on which these terms are conceptualised. The civil society is not very far removed from the state and markets and linkages across the three 'sectors' run deep. The authors observe that for good governance to occur, what is required is not only the democratisation of the state, but also the democratisation of civil society.

**Morrell, Elizabeth (2001)** 'Strengthening the local in national reform: A cultural approach to political change' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Oct 2001 32 (3) p437 (13).

In this paper, the author looks at the cultural changes that set political changes in motion in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto's regime. During President Suharto's regime, the thrust had been on homogenising culture and consolidating a unified history, at the expense of diverse local histories. The author examines the case of Ujung Pandang, the capital of the South Sulawesi Province, which reverted to its original name 'Makassar' in the post-Suharto period. The reinstatement of the old name was accompanied by wave of assertion of regional cultural heritage and identity. The focus of the millennium New Year celebrations that year was on the revival of this regional identity. The author looks at how regional history was infused into public culture to revive local civil society through cultural events during this period. The ways in which history and identity are reconfigured are understood through these events. She looks at the linkages between the cultural revival and political decentralisation, and localisation in the face



of cultural and economic globalisation. The cultural approach to political change and stabilising society faces many challenges, including dilemmas about traditional and modern values, maintaining religious and ethnic moorings while presenting a cosmopolitan image and the difficult task of finding a fine balance for a new nationalism that is both strong and diverse.

**Narayan, Ram and Pai, Sudha (2003)** 'Democratic Governance, Civil Society and Dalit Protest' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Pub., New Delhi.

This is a study of governance in Indian civil society with its deeply entrenched social hierarchies, in the context of Dalit protests. The authors begin by outlining a framework of civil society and the state in India which differs from the West due to its colonial legacy. The state is overdeveloped and relatively independent of society. Yet there are significant interconnections and overlaps as compared to the West. Political leaders may also be civil society leaders. Civil society is relatively new to India and therefore modern notions such as equality, rights and justice must contend with traditional values associated with a caste-based division of society. The democratic state which is supposed to arbitrate between equal citizens fails to be impartial because the population is heterogeneous. Dalits as a group have been historically marginalised, first by Hindu society, and later by the state manned by upper caste people. Therefore, their relationship with the state and position in civil society pose problems for governance. The study also looks at the role of Dalit associations in providing leadership to protest movements

and the role of the state, civil society and private players in governance when Dalits expect the state to provide justice.

The authors closely examines Dalit protest in light of the Shergarhi incident of April 1994 where the Meerut city administration removed an Ambedkar statue and follow the ensuing protest that took place under the leadership of the Rashtriya Soshit Morcha. The paper includes a detailed look at Dalit assertion in western UP, the RSM as an organisation and political responses to the incident.

**Nelson, Paul J. (2002)** 'Access and Influence: tensions and Ambiguities in the World Bank's Expanding Relationship with Civil Society Organizations' prepared for the project, *Voices: The Rise of Nongovernmental Voices in Multilateral Organizations*, The North-South Institute, April.

The author looks at the many ways in which the World Bank relates to civil society organisation. In recent years, the Bank has faced the wrath of many NGOs, who see the Bank as part of an unfair global economic system. Despite this, the Bank also has very cooperative working relationships with many civil society organisations.

The author suggests that there are three views of the World Bank's role in a changing world; a state-centred traditional view where the Bank has a formal bank-client relationship with national governments; a partnership model, where the Bank engages in partnerships with, and coordinates partnerships between, governments, civil society organisations and corporations; and, finally a global action model where the Bank acts in coordination with IMF and WTO to promote a legal and financial framework for corporate globalisation.



The paper seeks to provide an account of the Bank's interactions with CSOs, the involvement of citizens in PRSP processes and the interface between the Bank and national governments. The author observes that when the Bank interacts with CSOs issues are brought to the international arena, whereas when the Bank does the same with national governments, the focus is on national political institutions. The World Bank also encourages member governments to consult CSOs and involve them in national policy making processes.

**Oommen, T.K. (2003)** 'Civil Society and the Goal of Good Governance' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Pub. New Delhi.

The author begins by clarifying various conceptualisations of civil society, first as 'civilised society' as opposed to 'savage society' then in the traditions of Hegel, Marx and Gramsci where civil society is to varying degrees a subordinate, part or protector of the state, and finally civil society according to Tocqueville where it contests the power of the state. Finally the author puts forth an additional view of civil society as a space between the state and market.

He goes on to enumerate prerequisites of good governance in India that require the participation of a democratic civil society. These include ensuring a legitimate process of recruiting the ruling elite, facilitating proportionate representation of the population in governance, ensuring a culture of respect for the dominated by the dominant and instituting a reward-punishment mechanism.

Good governance requires a balance between the state, market and civil society and reduces disparity, discrimination and collective alienation in society to the extent that these are nonexistent or negligible. He places these challenges in the specific context of India where discrimination based on class, caste, religion and gender is prevalent and analyses specific trends in Indian society in each of these categories. T.K. Oommen is former Professor, Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

**Ostrom, Elinor (2000)** 'Radical Decentralization in Developing Countries: A Recommended Panacea without an Empirically Grounded Institutional Theory' 2000 Symposium: Development and the Nation State, April.

The recent trend towards decentralisation that espouses a radical devolution of power to local users may not be the panacea for the inefficiencies and mismanagement of natural resources by centralized authorities over the last so many decades. The author attempts to ground decentralisation in solid institutional theory and emphasizes the need to do adopt a cautionary approach to decentralisation. The author examines decentralisation in the context of various theories and demonstrates how conventional theories of common pool resources may be disproved by empirical examples of self-organization and self-governance. The author looks closely at the factors that determine self-governance and organization within a system and attempts to understand the design principles that govern successful self-governing arrangements.



The question of who is the best authority to design the rules is also addressed in this paper. The assumption that external officials and policy analysts are driven by public interest and local users driven by selfish interests is incorrect, says the author. Instead public policy must be based on the understanding that although individuals may not have the full picture they can, through a process of experimenting with rules devise appropriate systems, provided they have the right macro-political framework. An adaptive collective action is the way forward. The author suggests that a 'good society' may not have a neat structure, but it does have information and capacity to adapt to achieve sustainability, equity and efficiency.

**Parpart, Jane, L. (2000)** 'Rethinking Participatory Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/Local World', Presented at "Development: the Need for Reflection" Conference organised by the Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, 20-23 September, 2000.

Over the last couple of decades 'participation' and 'empowerment' have become integral aspects to mainstream development programmes of both international bodies including the World Bank, and non-governmental organisations. This 'bottom-up' approach, which has its roots firmly in the alternative development discourse, has become an essential feature of programmes focusing on gender equality.

This paper analyses the strengths and weaknesses of participatory development vis-à-vis women's empowerment. A central belief of participatory practices such as PRA, as put forth by Sir Robert Chambers, is that poor

people can analyse their situations and arrive at necessary development solutions. The author suggests that this process is under-theorised and that factors such as power relations and cultural norms deeply affect the quality of participation and the outcomes. For women, 'speaking out' is not the same as 'being heard', especially in communities where women's opinions are traditionally undervalued, says the author. Also, participation can in fact 'disempower', when it means relinquishing control over knowledge and its dissemination. The author calls for study of local power structures, both political and economic, and their relationship with gender. She suggests that the belief systems and cultural values that legitimise these material power structures also be examined carefully.

The author cautions that participatory development receives support from diverse quarters, including groups that support it because, with its emphasis on the local, it poses little threat to national and global forces. Instead it unwittingly draws attention away from larger political and economic structures. Participatory development needs to be followed by a deep understanding of how its operations at the local level are limited and defined by national and global structures.

**Parker, Andrew and Serrano, Rodrigo (2000)** 'Promoting Good Local Governance through Social Funds and Decentralization', World Bank, September.

This study examines the interface between two parallel channels of support by the World Bank: social funds and decentralization. Social funds empower communities, particularly the poor and marginalised, by directly financing development projects at the grassroots level



that improve delivery of social services. Decentralisation strengthens local governments and thereby accountability and responsiveness of local governments to the people's needs. While both aim to improve governance and accountability to the people, social funds have the potential to become parallel channels of finance and therefore can undermine local government, especially where the government is nascent or weak.

The authors compare and contrast the relationship between social funds and decentralization and their effect on local governance in seven different countries. Bolivia and Honduras, where the decentralization is fairly advanced, Peru and Zimbabwe, where there is some decentralization, and Cambodia, Malawi and Zambia, where there is very little, or no, decentralization.

Through this exercise, they aim to identify how responsibilities must be divided between social funds and decentralized government, how the two can work together towards common goals such poverty alleviation, and how contradictions may be avoided. Social funds can have maximum impact when necessary decentralization reforms are in place and they are aligned to the social funds.

**Price, Patricia L. (1999)** 'Bodies, Faith, and Inner Landscapes: Rethinking Change from the Very Local' *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 106, Vol. 26 No. 3, May 1999, 37-59.

The debt crisis in Latin America followed by adoption of neoliberal reforms with assistance from the IMF resulted in soaring poverty, unemployment, violence against women and psychological breakdowns. The paper deals

with the ways in which poor women in Latin America mediate, contest and alter their social relations during times of economic hardships. The author refers to Gramsci's conceptualization of crisis as a 'crucible' that holds the possibility for a reconfiguration of social relations and follows ways in which hardship has enabled women to alter the power relations that circumscribe their lives.

She argues for the inclusion of corporeal and psychological dimensions of poverty in social theory discussions on poverty. According to her, the geographic scales at which analysis is situated are not givens and the scale of the 'very local', which include the sites of domestic violence - bodies, faith and inner landscapes of hopes and dreams is also a scale of legitimate analysis.

**Raina, V. (2003)** 'Making Sense of Community Participation: Comparing School Education and Watershed Development', Diwan, R., and Govinda, R., (eds), *Community Participation and Empowerment in Primary Education*, Sage: London.

The paper is a study in contrasts between the understanding of 'community participation' in school education and in watershed development. While these are two distinct areas, a comparison of the definitions and approaches at the policy level yields valuable insights.

Calls for community participation in education have multiplied since the early 1990s. However, according to the author, the quality of participation leaves much to be desired. Unlike participation in watershed management, which includes transfer of significant powers to the people, participation



in education is restricted to the transfer of administrative and managerial powers without devolution of decision making powers with regard to academic content. Moreover, by making 'community participation' in education almost a precondition for investment in education, external agencies are forcing a top-down inferior form of participation.

Policy on watershed management places emphasis on traditional systems of managing natural resources and retaining and reviving them in favour of alien scientific methods wherever possible. In striking contrast, local/traditional systems of education do not feature at all in education policy. Community involvement is sought only to the extent of devolving administrative responsibilities and the teaching-learning process is the protected domain of "subject experts".

The way in which decentralisation translates into changes in organisational structure of delivery systems in each area is telling. The bulk of funding is given to the community group in watershed management and specific allocations are made for dedicated human resources to carry out the community's plans. In education, all academic and vital managerial tasks remain within the state line department and Village Education Committees are merely given the task of overseeing daily functioning and even there, the extent to which the official apparatus is accountable to VECs is ambiguous.

The author delves into various types of "community participation" and remarks that while it may be seen by cynics as a way to suppress resistance to the state and legitimise the state as it is, it can also be romanticised as

a route to alternative development bypassing the state in the belief that the "community knows best". He warns against both and stressed that empowerment both social and political is at the centre of participation.

**Ramachandran, H.,** 'Vision 2020: Governance and People's Participation' [planning-commission.nic.in/plans/planrel/bkpap2020/15\\_bg2020.doc](http://planning-commission.nic.in/plans/planrel/bkpap2020/15_bg2020.doc)

The author examines the implications of processes of decentralisation of government and the forms it has taken in India since 1992 with a focus on state-led initiatives. The Indian state has historically been far removed from the people, with very little local involvement in decision making. This characteristic, a part of the inherited legacy of the British form of government that existed before Independence, is now changing with a significant towards decentralised government. Liberalisation and decentralisation have occurred almost simultaneously in India. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments, passed in 1992 provide a framework for decentralised government through Panchayati Raj institutions.

The author studies the devolution of power to PRIs and identifies specific challenges facing the Indian government at the Centre, State and PR levels. Devolution of power often results in friction between local governments and the state government. In many cases, the Panchayati Raj institutions have contested the state's plans in the interests of the people.

Recognising the value of people's participation in local resource management, the government has sponsored initiatives for people's participation, such as Village Education Committees, Water User Associations,



Watershed Associations, Joint Forest Management Committees, and Self Help Groups in villages, and Neighbourhood User Groups and Resident Welfare Associations in urban areas. The author observes that these state-sponsored organisations need to be brought within the Panchayati Raj system.

**Ramachandran. V. (2003)** 'Community Participation in Primary Education: Discussion on Experiences from Rajasthan', Diwan, R., and Govinda, R., (eds), *Community Participation and Empowerment in Primary Education*, Sage: London.

The author evaluates the success of two major education initiatives in the state of Rajasthan that are centred on community participation, the Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish.

The Shiksha Karmi project started in 1987 aimed to improve access to basic education in areas the poor functioning of primary schools had led to despair and cynicism among local communities. It aimed to do so by training local youth with basic education to undertake the role of "shiksha karmis" and thus channelising local energy into making primary education a valuable experience. Right from the start, the project emphasised consensual decision making and capacity building among the local community. The paper traces the many successes of the project, including the several spin-off benefits that came about as communities identified their specific requirements and acted to make them a reality.

The objective of the Rajasthan Lok Jumbish, launched in 1992 by the central and state governments with support from Swedish Agency for International Development was to mobilise the community and improve the

quality of education. It began on the premise that the problem was not solely of supply but also of low participation. The project attempts to engage the community, empower marginalised people including women, respond sensitively to local needs and impress a culture of accountability of teachers to parents. School mapping and micro-planning are critical features of the initiative. However, discrepancies between the data collected by the Lok Jumbish and the government have caused many officials to question the need for parallel data collection.

The author analyses the challenges faced by both projects. As community based initiatives their survival and success depends on the ability to sustain the enthusiasm of the people while ensuring that the government performs its duty as well. In the process of mainstreaming, the Shiksha Karmi project has become less community focussed and more focussed on systems and management. Lok Jumbish has stirred questions among political leaders and officials who ask whether community participation is worth the money and effort and whether it is required at all in the implementation of primary education.

**Ranganathan, V. (2003)** 'World Bank and India's Economic Development' *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 18.

The author provides an insightful overview of the World Bank's contribution to various sectors of India's development and gives an account of recent changes in its approach. The Bank has been providing loans to India for fifty years now. While its early focus was on economic growth rather than development, its recent 20-20 vision for the year 2010 sets significant development targets including



reducing poverty to 15%, halving the proportion of malnourished children and establishing a reliable disease surveillance system.

Although the World Bank considers India a success story, India receives only a modest 4% of the Bank's funds. The author considers it valuable to examine how the Bank has influenced growth, development and poverty alleviation through its loans to the agriculture and forestry sectors, power sector and urban and social development. The author also provides a glimpse of the dilemmas facing the Bank in India and concludes that the World Bank's contribution to India's development have not been as much as the Bank would like to believe. He observes that the Bank's efforts in poverty eradication have been almost insignificant, a fact partially acknowledged in the 2001 report of the Operations and Evaluations Department of the Bank.

**Rueger, Jane (2003)** 'From Development Champion to Reluctant Ringmaster: Managing the Expanding Mission of the World Bank' EBSCO Publishing.

The author traces the growth of the World Bank from its inception in the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 as an institution dedicated to economic and macro economic reform to its modern-day role as a powerful multilateral development aid agency. She draws parallels between the experience of the World Bank and the British East India Company, which began as a successful imperialist trading company and eventually collapsed when its mission was expanded to administer the whole of British India. She suggests that the World Bank's role today has been similarly expanded beyond its capacity to perform efficiently and

recommends a re-examination of the Bank's mission.

Critics have come up with various solutions to the Bank's crisis. While some suggest that the Bank go back to its original mission and purely focus on economic reforms, others believe it must redefine itself as a development agency completely, and forfeit the image of a bank altogether. The author observes that the Bank must respect institutional limitations and understand that an over-expansion of its mission will detract from its effectiveness in combating poverty.

**SGTS Associates (2000)** Vietnam Case Study, Civil Society Participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), Report to the Department for International Development, Hanoi.

This paper on civil society participation in poverty reduction in Vietnam is one of three studies conducted by DFID on the topic. The other studies focus on Ghana and Zambia. According to the report, Vietnam has made exemplary progress in poverty reduction over the years. The report identifies Vietnam as an important case study in poverty reduction because of the successful partnership of government with other actors in poverty reduction. The single-party socialist state's commitment to poverty alleviation, control over the poverty reduction programme, and ability to implement long-term plans, unhindered by a competitive political environment, have accelerated the process. Vietnam began work with the international community to produce a Country Assistance Strategy in 1998 and became the pilot country for the World Bank in evolving a Comprehensive Development Framework in



1999. Vietnam will be required to produce a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper if it wants structural adjustment support.

The report identifies the success of the World Bank-led Poverty Working Group, which has created a forum for policy, as an important step. The PRSP process highlights the relationship between civil society and the state and in Vietnam, this has led to questions about the role of local NGOs.

**Shah, Anwar and Thompson, Theresa (2002)** 'Implementing Decentralized Local Governance: A Treacherous Road with Potholes, Detours and Road closures', World Bank, July.

The authors closely examine the many paths to decentralisation and argue that decentralization is not always adopted in order to improve the balance of power but often for other reasons including politics, the need for economic efficiency, the need to quell discontent and centralise or to pass the buck for measures that are necessary but unpopular. The authors look at various types of decentralization, political, administrative, and fiscal with respect to municipal, local governments in several countries.

The authors contend that while there is plentiful literature on the norms of decentralisation, there is very little attention given to the *process* of decentralisation. The authors examine various approaches; the big push vs. small steps, bottom up vs. top down, and uniform vs. asymmetric. They also look into the issue of inadequate capacity. Finally, the authors look at the implications of recent steps towards decentralisation in Indonesia via Laws 22 and 25 passed in 1999.

**Singh, S.K.(1999)** 'Self-governance for the Scheduled Areas' in Jha, S.N. and Mathur, P.C. (eds.) *Decentralization and Local Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

The author critically evaluates the Scheduled Areas Act of 1996 that extends panchayats to scheduled areas to provide local self governance amongst tribal populations. Although judicial verdicts made unconditional extension of the Panchayati Raj Act to tribal areas unconstitutional, a bill was passed on recommendations of the Bhuria committee that extended the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act to tribal areas. The author lists the salient features of the Act. The gram sabha has been made the nucleus of all activities and is empowered to preserve the customs of the local people and settle local disputes through traditional methods, approve plans and projects for social and economic development, identify and select beneficiaries for poverty alleviation and other programmes, acquire land for resettlement of people affected by projects and so on. The author points out positive and negative aspects of the Act. The Act is an attempt to really address the needs of tribal people and gives them control over their natural resources, the ability to tackle problems like indebtedness and alcoholism that often plague tribal communities and the power to monitor projects and programmes so that funds are not misused. The Act stipulates that at least half of the seats should be reserved for tribals at all tiers in Scheduled Areas as the population is mostly tribal. Other communities will receive proportionate representation.

The author expresses concern about certain aspects of the Act. The Act is applicable to



areas covered under the Fifth Schedule but not to those under the Sixth Schedule. There are also many tribal areas that do not fall under any categories. The relationship between the Panchayati Raj institutions and the Tribal Advisory Council prescribed by the Fifth Schedule remains unclear and although the Act aims to stay as close to local customs as possible, in many places local laws and customs are not codified and may be areas of ambiguity. He makes note of other problems that arise in the implementation of the Act in tribal areas such that it is in consonance with other laws such as reservation of seats. Definition of what constitutes a 'village' or 'community' is also unclear. The author provides a brief overview of the structure of tribal communities.

**Smith, T. (1996)** 'Citizenship, Community and Constitutionalism' *Parliamentary Affairs*, 1996 49(2).

The author considers the state of civil society in Great Britain in the light of the results of a widespread survey of young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 in the country. The survey called "Freedom's Children" reveals a startling disconnection between young people and politics, not because they are content with how things are but because of a lack of faith in political institutions. Post-modern society is characterised not only by political de-alignment, but also by the growing importance of 'status' and simultaneous decline of 'class'. The author identifies three worst case scenarios emerging from the de-politicised new generation. First, the sacrifice of social responsibilities for individualism leading to a 'politics of exclusion', second, a war between the sexes and finally, friction between different

generations as the ratio of young adults in the work force to older retired people decreases.

The author goes on to discuss the public's ratings of politics and mechanisms for political participation across different years and suggests that British democracy is going through a crisis of legitimacy. He looks at both the communitarian approaches as well as the social trust approach to addressing the crisis. The communitarian approach, whereby responsibility begins with the individual, the family, the community and finally the state, has found resonance with larger moves to 'decentralise' governance, which are not always aimed to boost democracy but are often the state's resort to shed responsibility. Parallely, the author looks at responses to constitutional reform in the U.K. The author places public opinion on this issue in the context of political machinations through the decades.

**Sommer, John, G (2001).** *Empowering the Oppressed: Grassroots Advocacy in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi.

This is a compilation of experiences of individuals and organisations working at the grassroots level to alter power relations. Case studies of empowerment in scenarios of oppression based on caste and unequal land ownership in states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh and are presented here. The compilation includes stories from the work activists such as Martin Macwan and the organisation Navsarjan in Gujarat, Chennaiah and Sahanivasa in Andhra Pradesh, M.D. Mistry and the organisation DISHA (Development Initiatives for Social and Human Action) in Gujarat, as well as Ela Bhatt and SEWA (Self-employed Women's Association) in Rajasthan.



The author applauds these initiatives that go beyond 'development' and aim to restore just power relations, which are essential for development to take place in the right direction. In order to do so, people need to be organised to collectively address core issues of land ownership, livelihoods, and government accountability and advocacy strategies must be devised to ensure people's participation in decision making, he says. He also looks at the interface between donors and grassroots movements and cites the specific example of the Unitarian–Universalist Holdeen India Programme.

**Tandon, Rajesh. (ND).** *Voluntary Action, Civil Society and the State* Mosaic Books, New Delhi.

The author provides a valuable introduction to voluntary action in India in which he examines its workings through history and takes a closer look at the interface between voluntary action and the government.

Voluntary action for public good is part and parcel of every religion and it has been an integral part of the Indian ethos for centuries. The author traces its development from reform movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to efforts in national reconstruction through Gandhian organisations post-independence to the development focus after the emergency with the proliferation of NGOs. He looks at the different schools of voluntary action: Gandhian, socialist, Marxist, religious and Dalit and examines the rationale behind voluntary action and how it works. The author also considers the increased prominence of the concept of 'civil society' in the 1990s and places 'civil society' in the context of the other sectors in India: state and markets.

With free market capitalism very much the dominant form of economic organisation and liberal democracy the dominant political model, the challenges faced by the voluntary sector today are several. In the national context, the rise of fundamentalism and corruption of the political system coupled with economic restructuring poses particular difficulties for development. While all these factors have seen a mushrooming of voluntary organisations that function with different motives and mandates, not all of which are for the 'public good'. The author closely examines the interface between civil society and the state since the colonial times and evaluates the needs of voluntary organisations and recommends ways by which they can be strengthened.

**Tandon, R. (2003)** 'The Civil Society-Governance Interface: An Indian Perspective' in Mohanty, Ranjita and Tandon, Rajesh (eds.) *Does Civil Society Matter*, Sage Pub. New Delhi.

The author outlines three approaches to civil society, civil society as a challenge to the hegemony of the state, civil society as a bridge between the state and citizens, and civil society as comprising all non-state actors and therefore legitimising free market enterprise. He attempts to define civil society as a collection of individual and collective initiatives for the 'common public good'. In form, civil society can be a space, a movement or a set of organisations. Each form provides a different perspective of civil society.

Civil society plays a critical role in governance. Governance is the process of looking after public resources for the common public good. Civil society has a responsibility to improve governance by strengthening self-governance



mechanisms, defining the public good, influencing public negotiations, ensuring state accountability, and assuring market accountability.

**Tharakan, M. (2003)** 'Community Participation in School Education: Experiments in the State of Kerala', Diwan, R., and Govinda, R., (eds), *Community Participation and Empowerment in Primary Education*, Sage: London

The author sets the education achievements of the state of Kerala against the backdrop of community participation and the involvement of civil society organisations. Kerala's high literacy rate (89.1% in 1991) and negligible dropout rate, almost zero urban bias in educational development are successes of its mass literacy movement. Efforts to improve the quality of education during the end 80s, early 90s were strongly rooted in the work of civil society groups like the Kerala Sahitya Shiksha Parishad.

The author gives examples of initiatives by the KSSP and the People's Planning Campaign towards strengthening the state education system. From forming school complexes to share facilities to conducting a vigyanotsavam (science festival) across the state, the KSSP aimed to improve the quality of education by involving community members and achieved considerable success. While several KSSP initiatives gained legitimacy through District Councils set up under DPEP, the KSSP decided to withdraw support to the state-sponsored District Primary Education Programme on the grounds that it did not involve the community at the stage of formulation, particularly teachers and parents who are implementers of the programme.

The paper also examines the achievements of the People's Planning Campaign through independent micro-level information on education in the state generated by the PPC. Important documents compiled include the Panchayat Development Report (PDR) that comprises the needs and problems of people identified at the Gram Sabha, a 1998 report of successful experiments published by the State Planning Board, the 1999 report by neighbourhood groups (sub-Gram Sabha) and the 1999 reports of beneficiaries on implementation of projects.

**Townsend, Janet, G. (1999)** 'Are non governmental organizations working in development a transnational community?', *Journal of International Development*, No.11, 613-623, 1999.

The author takes a critical look at the 'transnational community' of NGDOs and highlights its salient features and modes of operation. NGDOs have gained prominence in the 1990s for their potential as change agents in development. With the shrinking of the state and the end of the 'myth of the market' civil society and NGDOs within that, have taken centrestage in providing relief to the poor and marginalized. The growing power of NGDOs stems from their commonality of cause and the ubiquitous use of the same language of empowerment, resistance and development – a commonality further fueled by technological advance in communication and transportation that make it possible for NGDOs to have a shared sense of purpose. Thus, the author calls NGDOs "new cultural circuits of increasing significance".

The author remarks that this transnational community is unique in that innovative



practices at the bottom are adopted and more significantly, reworked by forces higher up. As there is a one-way flow of money, there exists an unusual awareness of Northern NGDOs and donors among southern NGDOs. While donors profess to 'learn' from SNGDOs and adopt 'NGOspeak', the author is skeptical about this claim and believes that it is a posture for public image. The author expresses discomfort with the lack of accountability within the NGDO community. While huge amounts of money are spent through NGDOs, there is very little data on flows of funds.

The shift in focus to civil society and 'networks' has resulted in huge sums of money being invested in association forming activities. The author suggests that associations are not inherently empowering and can have hierarchies themselves that are oppressive. Upward accountability and sustainability have become the watchwords of NGDOs today. She cautions that NGDOs are not as independent as they are often made out to be and prevailing conditions make them susceptible to co-option by donors and governments.

**Uemura, Mitsue (1999)** 'Community Participation in Education: What Do We Know?' The Knowledge Management System HDNED, World Bank.

The study examines the link between community involvement and access and quality of education through current literature on the subject. It also closely studies eight World Bank projects that involve community participation in education in Ghana, Tanzania, Chad, Malawi, Bolivia, Honduras, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. A total

of 23 education projects were identified through the ImageBank, Staff Appraisal Reports and Project Appraisal Documents as involving community participation. The eight selected exhibited a strong component of community participation. The paper also provides profiles of the other 15 projects.

**UNDP, 'Decentralisation in India: Challenges and Opportunities', Discussion Paper Series 1, Human Development Resource Centre, UNDP, New Delhi.**

The document emphasizes the close connection between the local democracy through Panchayati Raj institutions and livelihood security for the poor and recommends that UN agencies keep in mind the importance of decentralization from below to match decentralization from above. For too long benefits from development programmes have been cornered by local elites. Decentralisation through local governments provides an opportunity for social transformation so that poor, marginalized groups can articulate their concerns. However, central to their participation is livelihood security and. Development and democracy must go hand in hand. The document also argues for local institutions as a means of poverty eradication and sustainable human development.

The document looks at the UN approach to decentralization, the current status of its programmes in this area and its experience with participatory programming, especially with regard to the UN Development Assistance Framework. Key aspects of decentralisation strategy identified are capacity building at the local level, focus on women, advocacy for devolution of resources, authority and responsibility, information, a convergence



approach to social service delivery and decentralisation with the UN system.

**Weekes-Wagliani, Winnifred (1994)** 'Participatory Development and Gender: Articulating Concepts and Cases' Human Factor in Development (research programme) OECD.

This paper emphasises the need for including gender perspectives in participatory development. Key to participatory development is identifying social actors and understanding their specific needs. The specific obstacles to participation in decision making for women are unlike the challenges before men. Women represent more than half the population and therefore must be specifically involved in participatory development. The author identifies the objectives of participatory development are efficiency, empowerment and sustainability. The needs of women have to be differentiated from those of men if genuine empowerment must take place. The author studies the obstacles before women, which include cultural beliefs and traditions and social organisation of production. She goes on to look at ways to overcome these obstacles and also looks at climate of debates on this issue. Finally she examines case studies where gender differentiation has produced valuable results.

**Whitehead, Lawrence (2002)** 'Democratizing Development' Social policy in Development Context Project in the Social Policy and Development Programme, UNRISD, Geneva, November.

The author looks at the relationship between democracy and economic development as two critical features of what has come to be seen as a universal idea of 'good society'. While

there have been several studies correlating empirical aspects of the two concepts, the author makes a case for comparing the two concepts in totality keeping in mind their theoretical and ethical moorings. Political democracy has had many variations over the centuries. In various avatars, it has been compatible with slave-based economies, monarchy, republicanism, imperialism, socialism and capitalism. The author traces its 2500-year history culminating in the rise of political democracy as we know it today, which emerged out of a consolidation of all anti-communist regimes as 'democratic' during the Cold War. He goes on to trace the growth of economics and economic development as an idea from its beginnings during the Enlightenment to experiments with economic development in Third World countries during the Cold War that demonstrated how it shaped democracy and the state of civil rights.

The author suggests that the future of both democracy and development lies in convergence of the two concepts. Development will be democratised and ownership of development efforts will be devolved to local participants. The author looks into possibilities for democratised development processes and predicts the issues that will arise and recommends approaches to address them.

**World Bank (2000)** Overview of Rural Decentralisation in India Volume 2: Approaches to Rural Decentralization in Seven States, September.

With the passage of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution in the early 1990s, a real process of decentralization was



set in motion. Subsequently, states adopted conformity acts to implement the process. State Finance Commissions were meant to address the financial aspects of the decentralized roles and responsibilities of PRIs as defined by the state. This is a continuous process and many states are still evolving their approach. This document provides an overview of the basic approach of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Rajasthan based on conformity acts, discussions with officials at the state and district level, as well as PRI representatives. The study includes plenty of useful grassroots-level empirical data.

**World Bank-OED (2003) Community-driven Development: A Study Methodology, Operations Evaluations Department, World Bank, July.**

This document on community-driven development, an area of renewed and increased focus for the World Bank since the 1990s, is based on the discussions during a workshop held in April 2003 on CDD and tools for its assessment and evaluation.

The empowerment of the poor to fight poverty has become a guiding objective of the Bank, particularly in the 1990s. Between 2000 and 2002 CDDs received \$5.6 billion in new lending. Lending for these projects is slated to increase in the coming years.

But the extent to which the Bank has been able to 'empower the poor' through its interventions, is unclear. The document outlines the proposed methodology for an independent evaluation of the World Bank's community-driven development interventions. This global evaluation will assess interventions based on their relevance, efficacy, efficiency, institutional development impact and sustainability. The evaluation will also review CBD (community based development) projects as most CDD projects have evolved from ones that were originally CBD.

The study methodology defines key concepts of CDD and builds a conceptual framework for its evaluation. It takes a wide perspective of the Bank's CDD interventions and proposes the design and method for the OED evaluation.



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## Part B

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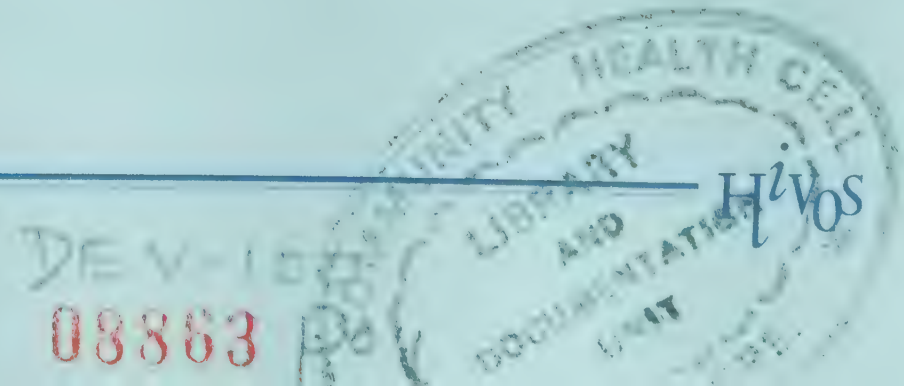
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There are still some copies available of publications printed before 1995, though these might on facts be outdated:

- HIV-AIDS,
- Management and Accounting Systems
- Future of Co-operatives in India
- Women in India.







## The Hivos India Regional Office

Hivos (Humanist Institute for Cooperation in Developing Countries, The Netherlands) is a secular Humanist development institution which stands for emancipation, democratisation and poverty eradication in developing countries. It was established in 1968 by representatives of the Humanist movement in the Netherlands. Hivos is inspired by the humanist, and secular outlook. Hivos co-operates with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) which work on the basis of participation and self-reliance of the poor, aim at structural social change in a non-dogmatic way, and can translate such objectives into a coherent development programme.

Hivos' involvement in India with programme partners started in 1979. Hivos Head Office with support from local consultants managed the programmes. In March 1991, the first Regional Office was established in Bangalore in an effort to bring Hivos 'closer to the field'. Today Hivos supports about 80 organisations and 105 projects. Hivos' programmes are concentrated in the three southern states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu and in the tribal belt which stretches from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the West, across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in the centre, to Orissa and Jharkhand in the east of the sub-continent. A number of partner organisations with a regional or national focus are located in the major urban centres of Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi. The work of the Regional Office includes a range of financial and non-financial services for the NGO sector, enhancing its monitoring capacity (more systematic and planned interventions); streamlining the programme in the tribal belt; identifying a number of partners who come into the policy spearheads of economic activities, culture, environment, gender, women and development, human rights and HIV/AIDS. In the sectors of economy and culture separate funds have been set up vis-à-vis the Hivos Triodos Fund and the Hivos Culture Fund.

Apart from its various primary functions listed above the regional office has stimulated discussions on a number of policy issues by means of seminars, smaller consultations and publications. Workshops have been organised on HIV/AIDS as a human rights issue, accounting systems, co-operatives, women in development, reproductive health, development policies in the '90's, and the impact of structural adjustment policies on the poor, eradication of poverty and quality of aid, health and equity, environment and livelihood support systems, the tribal belt strategy, ICT and development and Culture and the Arts. The workshops are often collaborative processes done with national organisations and NGOs. The publications listed come under the Hivos Technical Report Series, policy papers or monographs. Most of them have a wide circulation in India and abroad.

Hivos has reaffirmed its choice for concentrating on two main population groups in India: The dalit population and the indigenous (tribal) people. The emancipation of minorities and of women is perceived not in isolation but well-grounded and also working towards creating a receptive environment within the country - by reinforcing secularism, pluralism, and democracy. Hivos as an institution believes in integrating policy focus with quality programme development, placing high on its list issues of accountability, long-term goals of social equity and sustainability.

As one of the six Dutch Co-Financing agencies, Hivos derives a large part of its funds from the Co-Financing budget line of the Dutch Ministry for Development Co-operation. Hivos' total expenditures for 2003 in India amounted to 7.8 million Euros. These are inclusive of EU, additional and other funds.





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